

MUNDO OBRERO

- El presupuesto de Bush
- Venezuela contra Exxon 12

MICHIGAN

Fighting bank foreclosures 3

YOUTH JOBS

Implode with service slump 3

MUMIA RULING

Leaves one more appeal 4

RESISTERS TO WAR

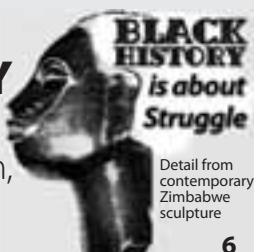
Book reviews 5

POLITICAL CONVENTIONS

Protesters map plans 6

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Globalization, economy and Obama 6



KOSOVO 'INDEPENDENCE'

Washington's new colony 9

WW 1965 MALCOLM X

Forces behind the assassination 10

EDITORIAL: FIDEL'S MESSAGE

10

More fallout from capitalist downturn Towns, cities face drastic service cuts

By Jaimeson Champion

Crises of overproduction have occurred with destructive regularity throughout the history of capitalism. During these cyclical crises, the ruling class systematically tries to force the working class to bear the brunt of the fallout.

In the current crisis, the systematic attacks on the working class and oppressed are painfully clear. Millions of families are being forced from their homes by foreclosures. Massive layoffs have begun across all sectors of the economy.

It is the workers who are being forced to pay the toll for a crisis that the bankers and bosses caused. This crisis has brought to the forefront class antagonisms that the superrich have long sought to obscure.

Now come the latest attacks: plans for even more drastic cuts in city and town services across the U.S. Programs that were never adequately funded during the so-called "boom" times are now faced with devastating funding cuts during the economic bust.

These intensifying cuts are threatened in areas ranging from infrastructure development in poor rural communities to social service programs in poverty-stricken major cities. The cuts are being targeted at services that many workers and oppressed populations depend on for survival, whether in rural towns or urban areas.

Intensifying cuts in services such as HIV/AIDS programs, outreach to the homeless, meal delivery programs for home-bound elderly, community health clinics that serve the uninsured—all will have an increasingly deadly impact on oppressed communities.

These criminal cuts in needed services are part of the ruling class's intensifying war against the working class during this time of crisis. They are likely to be further exacerbated in the coming months as capitalist politicians of both parties seek to address ever widening budget shortfalls by taking more away from the workers, especially those who have already fallen into deep poverty.

Most of the money in city and state budgets comes from tax

revenue and municipal bond issuances. Tax revenue is declining as plummeting property values mean less money in property taxes and slowing economic activity results in less sales tax revenue. At the same time, the market for municipal bonds is rapidly deteriorating.

Now insurers are defaulting

Historically, investors have been more than willing to buy municipal bonds issued by U.S. cities, states and towns because most of them have been insured against default by financial institutions known as monoline bond insurers.

But currently, these monoline bond insurers, such as MBIA and Ambac Financial Group, have balance sheets soaked in red ink and are under default pressure themselves as bad bets on mortgage-backed securities come home to roost. Cities looking to sell bonds in order to raise cash are finding that the number of buyers is rapidly dwindling.

The municipal bond market is just one of the latest sections of finance capital to succumb to the financial contagion that is emanating from the U.S. and quickly spreading around the globe.

It is hard to believe that as recently as last summer, the masters of finance capital were proclaiming that growth in the financial alchemy of securities, derivatives and other instruments had made the global capitalist system more stable and less prone to crisis.

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, as new markets have been opened up to imperialist exploitation, global financial markets have grown by leaps and bounds. Financial instruments have been invented to package and sell all kinds of debt to a growing pool of institutional investors. The mistaken belief was that by spreading risk out among many players, it would neutralize the damage from defaults and make the financial system less prone to collapse.

Continued on page 4

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY A Salute to Women's Resistance 2

SATURDAY

MARCH 8

12 Noon RALLY

Union Square 14th St. & Broadway

1 p.m. MARCH

3:30 p.m.

**Ending Ceremony
Triangle Shirtwaist
Fire Memorial**

Site of 1911 fire that killed 146 women workers
Corner of Washington Sq. Place
and Greene St.

Sponsored by International Women's Day '08 Coalition,
c/o Solidarity Center, 55 W. 17th St., 5th Fl, NY, NY 10011



Subscribe to Workers World

☐ 4 weeks trial subscription: \$1 ☐ One year: \$25

NAME

PHONE

EMAIL

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

WORKERS WORLD

55 W. 17 St. NY, NY 10011 212-627-2994 www.workers.org

For information and leaflets call **212.633.6646**

International Women’s Day

A salute to women’s resistance

The following statement was put out by the International Women’s Day '08 Coalition based in New York City.

To sign on to this statement, go to the www.troopsoutnow.org Web site.

- No war on women at home and worldwide
- Unite to win our liberation

On March 8, 1908, working women in the needle trade industry took to the streets of New York City demanding better working conditions, higher wages, shorter work-days and the overall improvement of women’s lives in this country.

These women marched through New York City demanding justice for women workers and immigrant workers; they were in fact working immigrant women.

The message and militancy of these women were so inspiring to women around the world that in 1910 the International Socialist Congress, meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark, officially declared March 8 International Women’s Day.

This year, on the 100th anniversary of that historic march, we call on you to join us in commemoration of International Women’s Day 2008 to honor all the women who have fought for our liberation by continuing the fight for freedom today.

We are in the midst of a rise in attacks on women—including Black, Latina, Asian, Indigenous, Arab and white here in the U.S.—as well as women who originate or currently live in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, the Middle East, Pacific Islands, Australia and Europe.

The attacks inside the U.S. include legal and extralegal attacks on our reproductive self-determination; an escalation of sexual assaults and rapes, like those against Megan Williams and Crystal Mangum; violence toward lesbian, bisexual and transgender women, like the persecution of the Jersey 4; and the detention and deportation of immigrant women and their families.

Artists worldwide are using their creativity to combat the anti-Black and anti-woman images we see in today’s corporate media machines. The media conglomerates peddle destructive mind-poison that hatefully twists and manipulates the images of women of all nationalities and backgrounds. These unrealistic messages promote the rape, abuse and murder of women and young girls everywhere.

Attacks on living standards and the war budget

The economic crisis is affecting women in a distinctive way. Women, young and old, are uniquely affected by the mortgage foreclosures; demolition of public housing in New Orleans, New York and elsewhere; evictions; lack of health care, childcare and job loss that this crisis—intensified by Wall Street’s greed for profits—has caused.

Women comprise the fastest-growing population of prisoners in the U.S.

Meanwhile, war on working-class youth and youth of color, including racist police brutality and militarization of schools, is demonizing and killing our children.

Cuts in funding for education and social programs are decreasing the quality of life of our youth. The illegal wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are stealing our children, dehumanizing them and devaluing them into nothing more than property of the U.S. military, or worse, taking their lives.



March 25, 1911, people crowd the streets to protest the senseless death of their daughters, mothers, sisters and lovers, trapped in the Triangle fire.

The conditions for women worldwide have greatly deteriorated as a result of war, occupation and ruthless U.S. foreign policy.

The military occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, costing trillions of our tax dollars, has caused a backward movement in women’s rights and freedoms in those countries, including a decrease in educational opportunities. Women in those countries are losing family members to murders and illegal detentions and are being sexually assaulted, killed and detained themselves.

The people of Palestine are under a violent and genocidal occupation by the U.S.-funded state of Israel. Women in the West Bank are seeing the demolition of their homes, the murder of their children and the imprisonment of Palestinian men and are being imprisoned and killed themselves. The women of Gaza are starving, dying of thirst and watching their children and loved ones die from lack of health care, water, food and income—all of this forced on them by the U.S. and Israeli blockade. In the most recent revolt against U.S. imperialism and Israeli apartheid, the women of Gaza played a key role in breaking through the Egyptian wall in order to obtain food, water and life necessities.

Women in Sudan and other areas of Africa are dying from U.S. sanctions; women in the Philippines are being rounded up and killed or imprisoned for resisting the U.S.-backed regime; the women of Latin America and the Caribbean are being affected by economic and political U.S. intervention, forcing them to live in poverty and leave their homes for the prospect of better opportunities.

Indigenous women are being brutally repressed for reclaiming their original lands throughout the Americas.

Worldwide sex trafficking has forced women and children into prostitution and illegal servitude. Often these women and children are kidnapped or forced into sex trafficking as a result of economic disparity rooted in imperialist plunder of their countries’ resources.

We mention all these issues because every issue is a woman’s issue.

What women are doing now to resist

The fight for women’s liberation has been a long road and will take unity and militancy to complete.

The growing numbers of new union members are largely women willing to stand up against their bosses

Continued on page 3

This week ...



★ In the U.S.

Towns, cities face drastic service cuts	1
International Women’s Day	2
Activists intensify efforts to stop foreclosures	3
Jobs for youth implode	3
Volvo workers on strike	4
Phila. court rejects a Mumia appeal	4
On the picket line	4
Refusing to commit war crimes—and testifying.	5
Protests at Republican, Democratic conventions	6
Holmes: Globalization, economic crisis and Obama	6
Battle for reparations	8
Free Rev. Pinkney!	8
Workers World in 1965	10

★ Around the world

Japanese protest U.S. nuclear warships	5
Washington gets new colony in the Balkans	9
P.R. teachers demand contract.	9
Thousands mourn Hezbollah military leader	11
New Australian prime minister says ‘Sorry’	11

★ Editorials

Fidel’s message	10
---------------------------	----

★ Noticias En Español

El presupuesto de Bush.	12
Venezuela contra Exxon	12

Workers World
55 West 17 Street
New York, N.Y. 10011
Phone: (212) 627-2994
Fax: (212) 675-7869
E-mail: editor@workers.org
Web: www.workers.org

Vol. 50, No. 8 • Feb. 28, 2008
Closing date: Feb. 20, 2008

Editor: Deirdre Griswold
Technical Editor: Lal Roohk
Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell, Leslie Feinberg, Monica Moorehead, Gary Wilson
West Coast Editor: John Parker
Contributing Editors: Greg Butterfield, G. Dunkel, Fred Goldstein, Teresa Gutierrez, Larry Hales, David Hoskins, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Cheryl LaBash, Milt Neidenberg, Bryan G. Pfeifer, Minnie Bruce Pratt
Technical Staff: Shelley Ettinger, Bob McCubbin, Maggie Vascassenno
Mundo Obrero: Carl Glenn, Teresa Gutierrez, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Donna Lazarus, Carlos Vargas
Internet: Janet Mayes
Supporter Program: Sue Davis, coordinator

Copyright © 2008 Workers World. Verbatim copying and distribution of articles is permitted in any medium without royalty provided this notice is preserved.

Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 55 W. 17 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011. Phone: (212) 627-2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$25; foreign and institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from University Microfilms International, 300 Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at www.workers.org/email.php.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., 5th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10011.

JOIN US.

Workers World Party (WWP) fights on all issues that face the working class and oppressed peoples—Black and white, Latin@, Asian, Arab and Native peoples, women and men, young and old, lesbian, gay, bi, straight, trans, disabled, working, unemployed and students.

If you would like to know more about WWP, or to join us in these struggles, contact the branch nearest you.

National Office
55 W. 17 St.,
New York, NY 10011
212-627-2994;
Fax (212) 675-7869
www@workers.org
Atlanta
P.O. Box 424,
Atlanta, GA 30301
404-627-0185
atlanta@workers.org
Baltimore
426 E. 31 St.,
Baltimore, MD 21218
410-235-7040
baltimore@workers.org
Boston
284 Amory St.,
Boston, MA 02130
617-983-3835
Fax (617) 983-3836
boston@workers.org
workersworld.net/boston

Buffalo, N.Y.
367 Delaware Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14202
716-566-1115
buffalo@workers.org
Chicago
27 N. Wacker Dr. #138
Chicago, IL 60606
773-381-5839
chicago@workers.org
Cleveland
P.O. Box 5963
Cleveland, OH 44101
216-531-4004
cleveland@workers.org
Denver
denver@workers.org
Detroit
5920 Second Ave.,
Detroit, MI 48202
313-831-0750
detroit@workers.org

Houston
P.O. Box 595
Houston, TX 77001-0595
713-861-5965
houston@workers.org
Los Angeles
5274 West Pico Blvd.,
Suite 203
Los Angeles, CA 90019
323-936-1416
la@workers.org
Milwaukee
milwaukee@workers.org
Philadelphia
P.O. Box 9202,
Philadelphia, PA 19139
610-931-2615
phila@workers.org
Raleigh, N.C.
raleigh@workers.org

Richmond, Va.
P.O. Box 14602,
Richmond, VA 23221
richmond@workers.org
Rochester, N.Y.
585-436-6458
rochester@workers.org
San Diego, Calif.
P.O. Box 33447
San Diego, CA 92104
619-692-0355
San Francisco
2940 16th St., #207
San Francisco, CA 94103
415-738-4739
sf@workers.org
Washington, D.C.
P.O. Box 57300,
Washington, DC 20037,
dc@workers.org



After court victory

Activists fight to stop foreclosures

By Kris Hamel
Detroit

New statistics confirm the widespread crisis in Detroit and throughout Michigan caused by predatory lending and racist, subprime home mortgages. Wayne County, where Detroit is located, ranked first in the U.S. in 2007 foreclosures.

According to RealtyTrac, a California-based mortgage research company, 4.9 percent of homes in Wayne County are in some stage of the foreclosure process, a figure that is almost five times the national average. Stockton, Calif., ranked second at 4.8 percent while Las Vegas and suburbs, with 4.2 percent of homes in foreclosure, came in third.

The number of foreclosures filed in Wayne County in 2007 was 72,616, a 68-percent jump from 2006. Oakland and Macomb counties, which together with Wayne comprise the metro Detroit area, had a foreclosure rate of 2.1 percent of households, ranking them 17th among metropolitan areas in the U.S. and nearly double the rate in 2006.

Overall, the state of Michigan ranks third in the country for the highest rate of home foreclosures, with 136,205 foreclosures filed in 2007, or almost 2 percent of all homes. This rate is 68 percent higher than 2006, and a staggering 282 percent over 2005.

Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm has failed to acknowledge the crisis, even though the state leads the country in unemployment and job losses and has been in a severe economic depression for years due to restructuring, outsourcing, plant closures and attempted union busting in the auto industry.

But grassroots political leadership is stepping up to the plate, taking on the inaction of the government and advocating a program that can provide real relief to Michigan's working, unemployed and poor people. The Michigan Emergency

Committee Against War and Injustice (MECAWI) has been engaged in a struggle demanding the governor declare a state of economic emergency and use her authority under the law to impose a moratorium stopping foreclosures.

MECAWI organizers have opened a broad campaign to popularize the idea of a moratorium and to show the basis for the governor to take such action. Thousands of people have signed petitions demanding the governor declare a moratorium. Victims of predatory lending and home foreclosures have become involved in this struggle. More and more activists are speaking out and organizing and have received an excellent response from the public.

MECAWI wins in court

Recently the campaign has taken on the reactionary, repressive state apparatus allied with the banks and financial institutions that want to squash this struggle.

MECAWI activists filed a complaint in federal court on Feb. 8 claiming their First Amendment rights to free speech were violated by the City of Detroit and the state's attorney general in December.

On Dec. 13, Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox had hosted an "avoid foreclosure" forum at Cobo Hall. More than 4,200 people came to seek relief.

The forum provided dozens of banks and lenders with a forum in which to talk to people and give supposed tips on how to avoid losing their homes. But MECAWI activists were ejected from Cobo Hall when they tried to leaflet and petition the attendees about the moratorium campaign.

The attorney general scheduled another such forum at Cobo Hall for Feb. 12. Jerry Goldberg, a MECAWI organizer and progressive lawyer, argued at an emergency hearing before U.S. District Court Judge David Lawson on Feb. 11 that plaintiffs should be allowed access to the forum

attendees.

At the hearing, lawyers for the attorney general and for the city, which owns Cobo Hall, exposed their animus against the campaign for a moratorium on foreclosures.

In his 16-page opinion and order, which ruled in favor of MECAWI, Judge Lawson stated: "The [attorney general] contends '[p]laintiffs' moratorium only delays the issues. It is not a solution. Further, plaintiffs' position could disrupt the cooperation of the mortgage servicers who are participating voluntarily. Plaintiffs' position is hostile to the servicers and focuses blame on them.'"

The court wrote further: "[I]t appears from the attorney general's briefing that its restriction against the plaintiffs' leafleting is not content-neutral, and limiting the plaintiffs from distributing leaflets violates the First Amendment. ... The Court finds that the plaintiffs' proposed leafleting activity advancing [their] viewpoint and seeking ... political action is protected by the First Amendment. ... shielding lenders and the public who will come to see them from this viewpoint certainly cannot be a governmental interest ... that justifies curtailing speech. ...

"[T]he plaintiffs have demonstrated a likelihood of success on the merits of their claim. The Court also believes that if the plaintiffs lose out on the ability to offer their message to the thousands of attendees, they would suffer irreparable harm."

The court granted MECAWI activists the preliminary injunction and ordered that the defendants—the city and the attorney general—be restrained and enjoined from

prohibiting MECAWI's right to leaflet and petition inside Cobo Hall at the Feb. 12 "avoid foreclosure" forum.

MECAWI organizers, buoyed by this legal victory that sprang from their struggle, reported that people attending the forum "grabbed up literature and stood in line to sign petitions." The following day in Saginaw, Mich., MECAWI activists were allowed to leaflet and petition inside another forum hosted by the attorney general, even though that wasn't included in their lawsuit and injunction.

Jerry Goldberg told Workers World: "Activists felt great taking on the state and actually winning. While none of us holds any credence in the judicial system, and all of us know that the laws are stacked in favor of the capitalists, we felt that this victory was won because of struggle, because we have refused to back down from putting forward a solution to the foreclosure crisis that's devastating the working class. The government and banks and lenders may hate our campaign, but it resonates with the workers and oppressed who are losing their homes in record numbers."

Moratorium activists are also taking up direct actions and have begun organizing squads and preparing to defend homes when bailiffs and sheriffs come to foreclose and evict families.

MECAWI has called a demonstration for Feb. 27 at noon outside the HUD office in Detroit at the McNamara Federal Building to call attention to the federal government's role in paying off banks and lenders, then foreclosing homes and throwing people into the streets. □

Jobs for youth implode

By Caleb T. Maupin

In the late 1970s the British punk band The Clash wrote and performed "Groovy Times," a song about a pitched battle between unemployed youth and the cops in the Brixton area of London. The jobs the youth depended on simply didn't exist any more.

It seems that today the situation is growing very similar for U.S. youth. The Web site of the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that in January unemployment among young people ages 16-19 rose steeply, from 15 percent a year ago to 18 percent today. (bls.gov) This dramatic increase has gone largely unreported in the capitalist media.

For many working-class youth, especially those trying to get an education, jobs in the service industries have been their only way of making some money, especially with the virtual dismantling of manufacturing in this country.

On Feb. 5, the Institute for Supply Management reported that an index measuring the service sector of the economy had fallen to its lowest level since 2001, indicating a general economic slowdown. (New York Times, Feb. 6) This announcement was seen as so ominous that it caused big drops in the Asian stock markets that day.

McDonald's recently announced that sales in its U.S. stores dropped in December, despite modest profit growth for the quarter. Starbucks, a corporation that hires many young people to serve coffee, grew by only 1 percent last year, the worst it's done "in years." (businessandmedia.org)

Many service jobs, like supermarket clerks and gas station attendants, are

being eliminated altogether. Self-service is replacing workers, many of them youth.

They are coming up against what Marxist-Leninists call overproduction. In a period of

economic boom, competition drives the big capitalists to expand the means of production and at the same time cut wages, to the point where the volume of goods and services produced far exceeds what workers can afford to buy—even if they have credit cards. As wages decline and steady factory jobs are stolen from workers, they cannot afford to eat out, even at McDonalds, let alone buy an expensive coffee in the morning.

The view that capitalism is a paradise, created in Ayn Rand novels and other disgusting right-wing propaganda, is becoming a joke to the countless U.S. youth now under the pressure and strain of being unemployed in an economic system incapable of compassion.

Some 2 million U.S. workers are now locked away, the majority of them young people, and most for the victimless crime of selling drugs—something youth are known to turn to when legal means of getting by are less available.

But young people are known for their defiance, their will to resist and their courage against injustice. The recession we face currently could become much worse than the situation British youth faced at the time of the Brixton "riots" that The Clash sang about.

As capitalism deteriorates and millions of youth are up against a wall, they will discover that they have no choice but to stand up, fight back and smash the system that holds them down. □



International Women's Day

A salute to women's resistance

Continued from page 2

and fight for justice at the workplace.

Mothers, wives, sisters and grandmothers are organizing challenges to racist cops who murder their sons, grandsons, husbands and partners with impunity.

Women are leading the fight against military recruiters in their children's schools and their neighborhoods.

Women are fighting against the legal and extralegal heteronormative and homophobic assaults on the LGBT communities.

Military women are standing up and resisting the violence against their persons and the imperialist wars.

Women across the country are organizing against domestic violence, rapes and racist torture.

Women continue to band together to defend their right to control their own bodies and to fight for reproductive justice.

Women are standing up against the bulldozing of their homes and leading the struggles against displacement, gentrification, foreclosures and criminal landlords.

Women have mounted strong and united efforts against the destruction of our land, air, food, water and environmental racism.

Women organize to free their family members who are political prisoners.

Women band together in their com-

munities to stop the lack of quality education, jobs, health care and a safety net for the disabled, seniors, poor families, the homeless and children.

Women stand up against the racist immigration policies that separate them from their children and families.

Women are struggling to recover their children from the so-called child welfare system.

Women will use their creativity to conjure what is nurturing, beautiful and strong about women in our songs, our dances, our poems, our drawings and our musical compositions.

Whether on the streets, in the schools or in our own homes, women will continue to organize their families and friends and will not stop until a more life-affirming depiction of the sustainers of our world becomes mainstream.

Our mission is to empower women worldwide as well as to bring to the attention of our sisters and brothers that we must challenge our oppressors' divide-and-conquer tactics, such as racism, sexism, homophobia and xenophobia.

This call is for all of us to honor and uphold the great traditions of women warriors who continue to display courage, strength, wisdom and the will to resist against great odds. Organize, Resist and Build Our Movements for Victory! □

Volvo workers on strike

By Martha Grevatt

Nearly 2,500 members of UAW Local 2069 have been on strike since Jan. 31 against Volvo in Dublin, Va. According to Local 2069 President Lester Hancock, the company has made “unreasonable proposals that would erode the wages and benefits that we’ve fought so many years to achieve and protect” and tried “to dismantle many of the most basic health and safety protections found in our current agreement.”

The plant is Volvo’s only heavy-duty truck plant in the U.S. and also makes trucks for Mack. Demand for trucks at the moment remains sluggish, which could limit the strike’s immediate impact. Volvo will feel the pinch, however, if it gets a special order or if demand picks up.

The vote to authorize the strike was 95 percent in favor, and the union reports solid member support. Strikers are picketing round the clock. UAW Local 3250 in Cleveland, N.C., has been asking its ranks to

donate cases of bottled water, six-, 12-, or 24-packs of sodas, coffee, condiments, hot chocolate/cocoa, hot dog buns and “weenies.”

Both Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton, in the days leading up to the Democratic presidential primary, voiced their solidarity, suggesting their awareness of strong community backing.

The workers will “stay out here as long as it takes,” according to striker Carol Burton. “This is our future.” □

No ruling yet on new trial

Pa. court rejects a Mumia appeal

By LeiLani Dowell

The struggle to free world-renowned journalist and political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal continues after Pennsylvania’s racist courts again ruled against him on Feb. 19, rejecting an appeal filed by his lawyers on his behalf.

However, his supporters are still awaiting a separate, major ruling from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit that will determine if he is granted a new trial, has his conviction overturned, or sees the death sentence reinstated.

Abu-Jamal was convicted, in a political frame-up and a thoroughly corrupt trial, of killing police officer Daniel Faulkner in 1982.

The appeal that was rejected on Feb. 19 by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court had challenged a 2005 ruling against a Post Conviction Relief Act (PCRA) petition filed on the case.

The PCRA petition was based on affidavits by Yvette Williams and Kenneth Pate, who stated that two of the key witnesses who testified against Abu-Jamal during his original trial had later confessed to them that they had been lying. Williams testified that she had shared a jail cell with Cynthia White, who said the Philadelphia police had coerced her, with death threats and mon-

etary compensation, to falsely accuse Abu-Jamal as the killer. Pate testified that his stepsister, hospital security guard Priscilla Durham, told him the police peer-pressured her into falsely claiming that Mumia boasted while at the hospital about killing Faulkner.

Despite the fact that these new revelations of witness tampering only became known shortly before the PCRA petition was filed in 2003, Pennsylvania Court of Common Pleas Judge Pamela Dembe dismissed the petition on the grounds that it was “untimely.”

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court is led by former Philadelphia District Attorney Ron Castille, who has refused to recuse himself from the case despite the fact that, during his tenure as district attorney, he fought against Abu-Jamal’s appeals.

After the ruling Hans Bennett, co-founder of Journalists for Mumia, interviewed several prominent figures in the struggle to free Abu-Jamal. Robert R. Bryan, lead counsel for Abu-Jamal, stated: “We were not surprised since that court has a history of not addressing the racism and fraud that has dominated the prosecution since its inception over a quarter of a century ago. By dismissing the appeal on



Long suppressed photos showing evidence of a police frameup were recently published in Germany.

procedural grounds, the court avoided dealing with the compelling facts establishing that the prosecution of my client was based upon lies, half-truths and bigotry.”

Other recent developments in Abu-Jamal’s case include the release of photographs taken at the scene of the shooting that reveal police manipulation of the scene and discredit testimony from prosecution witnesses. The photographer had offered the pictures to the prosecution during the original trial, but was never called.

Organizers in the struggle to free Abu-Jamal are asking people to reach out to their networks with updates on his case. Pam Africa of International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal said, “I urge readers to please help fight the media bias by going to Abu-Jamal-News.com to see the new photo evidence, download the information and spread the word at this urgent time in Mumia’s case.” □

More fallout from capitalist downturn

Towns, cities face drastic service cuts

Continued from page 1

Then-Federal Reserve Board head Alan Greenspan said confidently in 2005, “The use of a growing array of derivatives and the related application of more-sophisticated approaches to measuring and managing risk are key factors underpinning the greater resilience of our largest financial institutions.”

Now fast forward to 2008. It is these very same securities and derivatives that are wreaking havoc on the global financial system and threatening to reduce the large “resilient” financial institutions to a heap of rubble.

The growing interconnectedness between streams of finance capital has greatly increased the risks of contagion. Trouble that started in debt tied to subprime mortgage loans quickly spread into many other debt markets, including credit cards, student loans, auto loans, municipal bonds, corporate bonds and so on.

The current crisis is daily proving that the global capitalist system is becoming increasingly more unstable.

In his book “A Critique of Political Economy,” Karl Marx’s closest collaborator, Frederick Engels,

wrote that “each successive crisis is bound to become more universal and therefore worse than the preceding one.” He predicted that the end result would be “a social revolution such as has never been dreamt of in the philosophy of the economists.”

In this lopsided world, where the number of billionaires grew to almost one thousand in 2007 while almost 900 million people went hungry, the inherent contradictions in the capitalist mode of production cannot be denied. With the growth of worldwide class solidarity, the social revolution is sure to come. □

ON THE PICKET LINE

by Sue Davis

Shuttle drivers vote union

On Feb. 8, Emory shuttle drivers with First Transit in the metro-Atlanta area voted unanimously to join Teamsters Local 728. The Teamsters already represent more than 10,000 First Transit workers around the U.S. Drivers in other Atlanta-area locations are voting by mail; their ballots will be counted on Feb. 22.

Although lower management threatened and harassed union supporters in the days leading up to the vote, the workers filed unfair labor charges and were not intimidated. Driver Angela Holloway said the drivers are planning to negotiate a contract with “positive changes in salary, health benefits, pension options and overall treatment.” (emorywheel.com, Feb. 11)

Workers protest foundry closing

Outside a meeting of the Berkeley City Council on Feb. 12, foundry workers at the Pacific Steel Plant protested a measure that could lead to closing their factory. The workers, mostly Mexican and Asian immigrants and African Americans, are represented by Glass Molders Local 164, which spearheaded the struggle for and won the Industrial Retention Ordinance in the 1980s to stop plant closures. Despite the ordinance, Pacific Steel is now the only working foundry and one of a handful of manufacturing plants left in Berkeley. (David Bacon, Feb. 12)

Adjuncts seek contract at Wayne State

Ever since negotiations started on Nov. 16, representatives of the 900 part-time adjunct faculty at Detroit’s Wayne State University have been fighting for their first collective bargaining contract. They are represented by the Union of Part-Time Faculty, which is part of the Federation of Teachers.

UPTF spokesperson Amanda Hiber said the biggest issue was low pay; adjuncts earn a fraction of what full-time faculty make. “We also receive no benefits, no insurance, no participation in the retirement program, no sick pay. And we pretty much have no job security from semester to semester.” She noted that the union’s overall goal is to win respect for adjuncts, many of whom have taught at WSU for 20 or 30 years without recognition or support. The adjuncts are the last group of university employees to fight for a union contract. (www.laborradio.org, Feb. 8)

Unprotected laundry workers die

On Jan. 14, the House Workforce Protections Subcommittee held a hearing in Linden, N.J., to investigate how Victor Diaz and Carlos Diaz were suffocated on Dec. 1 while cleaning a 20,000-gallon tank containing dry-cleaning chemicals at the industrial laundry North East Linen.

Their bodies were found with no protective equipment other than plastic wrapped around their feet. The hearing showed, among other things, that Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations protecting workers in confined spaces were not followed. (UNITE HERE press release, Jan. 29)

Demand safety in mines

Did you know that Richard Stickler, the head of the Mine Safety and Health Administration, used to be a coal-mining executive whose mines had injury rates twice the national average?

That goes a long way to explain why a new study shows the MSHA has failed to fine coal companies for more than 4,000 safety and health violations over the last six years. That also explains the recent rash of deadly mine disasters like the one at Crandall Canyon, Utah, last summer and others at Sago, Darby and Aracoma mines. (Point of information: Bush bypassed the Senate to appoint Stickler after the Senate twice refused his nomination.)

Go to americanrightsatwork.org to sign a petition demanding improved mine safety. While you’re at it, check out the United Mine Workers website (umwa.org) to find out more about this issue.

Delta flight attendants want union

On Feb. 14, Delta flight attendants filed for union representation with the National Mediation Board. The union campaign began in late 2006—management scare tactics had thwarted an earlier drive after 9/11. More than 12,000 workers, who will be able to vote for the union within 60 to 90 days, are “eager for an election” before a widely anticipated merger with Northwest Airlines. NWA attendants are already represented by AFA-CWA. (union press release, Feb. 14)

Labor against privatizing Iraqi oil

U.S. Labor Against the War has joined with several international groups to protest privatization of Iraq’s publicly owned oil resources. On Feb. 22 in front of the Exxon Mobil lobby office in Washington, D.C., USLAW will release an open letter to President Bush and Iraq Prime Minister Maliki with that demand and also call for organizing and bargaining rights for all Iraqi workers. To sign the letter, go to www.uslaboragainstwar.org. □

Refusing to commit war crimes—and testifying

By Dee Knight

The Deserter's Tale: The Story of an Ordinary Soldier Who Walked Away from the War in Iraq by Joshua Key

Road from Ar Ramadi: The Private Rebellion of Staff Sergeant Camilo Mejía by Camilo Mejía

Other books of interest: **Letters from Fort Lewis Brig: A Matter of Conscience** by Sgt. Kevin Benderman; **Mission Rejected: U.S. Soldiers Who Say No to Iraq** by Peter Laufer; **Dissent: Voices of Conscience—Government Insiders Speak Out Against the War in Iraq** by Col. (Ret.) Ann Wright and Susan Dixon; **Anti-War Soldier: How to Dissent Within the Ranks of the Military** by Jonathan W. Hutto

“Trained to kill! Kill we will!” That’s what U.S. Army recruits must shout while marching to the mess hall for a meal. That’s all it took for Pvt. Jeremy Hintzman to know he had to get out. He was the first U.S. war resister from the Iraq war to seek refugee status in Canada.

It took a little longer for Pvt. Joshua Key, but he still was not rabid enough for them. If you fail to show sufficient enthusiasm, you’re “smoked.”

“They made me do push-ups, duck walks, crawl around on my hands and knees, and stand at attention while every man in my platoon hollered that I was a ‘useless asshole’ and a ‘stupid shit,’” says Pvt. Key in “The Deserter’s Tale.”

“One day, all 300 of us lined up on the bayonet range, each facing a life-size dummy that we were told to imagine was a Muslim man. As we stabbed the dummies with our bayonets, one of our commanders stood at a podium and shouted into the microphone: ‘Kill! Kill! Kill the sand n—rs!’ We were made to shout out [the same thing]. While we shouted and stabbed, drill sergeants walked among us to make sure we were all shouting.”

That was basic training. Key remembers advanced training with the 43rd Combat Engineer Company. His officers repeated warnings, “If you feel threatened, kill first and ask questions later.”

“I had army chants buzzing through my head, like ‘Take a playground, fill it full of kids. Drop on some napalm, and barbecue some ribs.’”

The real thing was yet to come. In Iraq, Key’s first duty assignment was to set off explosives to blast open doors of Iraqi people’s homes, join a six-person assault team storming in to terrorize everyone inside, and take prisoner any male over 5 feet tall. “We put our knees on their backs, pulled their hands behind them, and faster than you can bat an eye we zipcuffed them. Zipcuffs are plastic cuffs that lock on tight. They must have bit something fierce into those men’s skin. ... The Iraqi

brothers were taken away to an American detention facility for interrogation. ... I never saw one of them return to the neighborhoods we patrolled regularly.”

Later Key had to pull guard duty in front of a hospital in Ramadi, for weeks on end. A little girl who lived near the hospital would run up to the fence he was guarding and call out “the only English words she knew: ‘Mister, food!’”

Key said, “She was about seven years old. She had dark eyes, shoulder-length brown hair, and—even for a young child—seemed impossibly skinny. She usually wore her school uniform—a white shirt with a blue skirt and a pair of sandals.”

Several weeks into his guard duty at the hospital in Ramadi, Key said, “I was back at my post in front of the hospital. I saw the girl run out of her house, across the street, and toward the fence that stood between us. I reached for an MRE [meals ready to eat-ed.], looked up to see her about 10 feet away, heard the sound of semiautomatic gunfire, and saw her head blow up like a mushroom. ...

“My own people were the only ones with guns in the area, and it was the sound of my own people’s guns that I had heard blazing before the little sister was stopped in her tracks.”

The bulk of Pvt. Key’s duty in Iraq was “busting into and ransacking homes. ... Before my time was up in Iraq, I took part in 200 raids. ... We never found weapons or indications of terrorism. I never found a thing that seemed to justify the terror we inflicted every time we blasted through the front door.”

U.S. terrorists

“It struck me,” Key said, “that we, the American soldiers, were the terrorists.”

Joshua Key was a dirt-poor 19-year-old from Guthrie, Okla., married with two infant children, who was lured from his job delivering pizza by an Army recruiter. His experiences in Iraq “got me thinking,” he said. “How would I react if foreigners invaded the United States and did just a tenth of the things that we had done to the Iraqi people? I would be right up there with the rebels and insurgents, using every bit of my cleverness to blow up the occupiers.”

Staff Sgt. Camilo Mejía’s experiences were essentially identical to those of Pvt. Joshua Key, except he was a squad leader. When he and his squad were ordered to blast into an Iraqi home, he was responsible to make sure it was done properly. And to deal with his men afterward—including when the orders they carried out subjected them to unnecessary danger. Mejía said he and his men were ordered

to “draw the enemy out” in “fierce fire-fights and roadside bomb attacks, most of which could easily have been avoided.” Tensions and resentment mounted, and “I heard rumors that soldiers in our unit were plotting [the commander’s] assassination.”

Both Mejía and Key had sufficient direct experience of being ordered to commit war crimes in Iraq that they had enough. As soon as they were allowed out of Iraq on leave, they decided not to come back. Mejía chose to refuse publicly and apply for conscientious objector status. He was rejected, and was sentenced to a year in military prison and a bad conduct discharge.

Key just left. He rejoined his wife and their then three small children, and went underground for over a year. Finally, after “googling” the Internet with “deserter needs help,” he got in touch with the War Resisters Support Campaign in Toronto.

“Sucking up the courage to drive to the border of my own country was the hardest thing I had ever done,” he said.

Camilo Mejía found support for his refusal here in the U.S.—first with the Citizen Soldier support organization and its legal director Todd Ensign, and later with the pacifist Peace Abbey, which gave him sanctuary until he turned himself in to fight for his right to be recognized as a conscientious objector.

Despite losing his case before the military kangaroo court, and serving nine months in military prison, Camilo Mejía came out of prison fighting, and has traveled around the country speaking and organizing. He is now the chairperson of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), and deeply involved in building for the Winter Soldier Hearings to be held in mid-March in Washington, D.C.

A growing number of others have followed Mejía’s example. In December 2004, Navy Petty Officer Pablo Paredes from the Bronx refused to board ship in San Diego and sail to the Persian Gulf. He didn’t want to be “part of a ship that’s taking 3,000 Marines over there, knowing a hundred or more of them won’t come back.” He said he “never imagined, in a million years, we would go to war with somebody who had done nothing to us.”

After his May 2005 court-martial, Pablo Paredes was sentenced to three months hard labor while confined to base and then discharged. He then became a counselor for the GI Rights Hotline. That year the Hotline reported an estimated 32,000 individual callers, about 30 percent of whom were asking for help with being AWOL. Tens of thousands of GIs have gone AWOL since the U.S. invasion

of Iraq in March 2003. About 11,000 have deserted, according to Pentagon figures.

African-American GIs are not a visible part of the resistance community, which does not, of course mean Black GIs are not resisting. The Pentagon figures make it obvious that the vast majority of resisters are living underground in the U.S. And Canada is far less often perceived as an option for a young Black man, despite the fact that racism is less intense and strident in Canada than it is in the U.S.

Lt. Ehren Watada, who in January 2006 became the first officer to refuse to serve in Iraq, told the Veterans for Peace Convention in August of that year, “I speak with you about a radical idea. It is one born from the very concept of the American soldier (or service member). It became instrumental in ending the Vietnam War. ... The idea is this: that to stop an illegal and unjust war, the soldiers can choose to stop fighting it.”

In November 2005, Rep. John Murtha, a Pennsylvania Democrat and veteran of 37 years in the Marine Corps, switched from supporting to opposing the U.S. war in Iraq. Why? “The future of our military is at risk,” he told Congress. “Many say the Army is broken. ... Choices will have to be made.”

The GIs who have refused made their choices. And they have begun to change history.

IVAW has found enormous interest and support among both veterans and active-duty GIs to testify at the Winter Soldier Hearings, set for March 13-16, about their experiences in Iraq. And the organization has become a potent force in organizing GIs both here in the U.S. and in Iraq, to oppose the illegal and racist orders they receive as standard operating procedure.

Most recently, IVAW has built vibrant chapters among active-duty soldiers at Fort Lewis, Wash., and Fort Drum, N.Y.—the major deployment points for combat duty in Iraq. It has chapters at other bases, including Fort Bragg, N.C., the “home of the Airborne”; Camp Pendleton Marine Base near San Diego, and Fort Hood in Texas.

IVAW has the strong support of Veterans for Peace, the Vietnam-generation group that has thousands of members nationally. The two generations of veterans have forged a strong bond, based on their common experience of having been ordered to commit war crimes in senseless wars of aggression. They also share the experience of finding strong support in the general population when they tell the truth they were forced to live: that the government had sent them to war with lies and terror. The truth they tell is hard to refute. □

Japanese protest U.S. nuclear warships

When the U.S. nuclear aircraft carrier Nimitz arrived Feb. 12 in Sasebo port in Sasebo city, Nagasaki prefecture, 250 workers with their labor unions came out to protest its arrival. That morning, after 8 a.m., as the Nimitz was entering Sasebo port, 27 boats surrounded the warship and denounced its presence. At the same time on shore 120 workers angrily pro-

tested what they considered an outrage.

After noon, a protest rally was held in Shimanose Park in downtown Sasebo, where 1,200 workers gathered for a rally. After the rally, participants demonstrated against the military base.

Three days later, the U.S. Aegis-class destroyer Lassen arrived in Nagasaki port in Nagasaki city. Some

200 workers protested the Lassen’s entering Nagasaki. As an Aegis destroyer, the Lassen could carry nuclear weapons. Its targets are in North Korea and China. The anti-war forces refuse to allow this warship to enter the port of Nagasaki, site of the Aug. 9, 1945, dropping of the atomic bomb.

—Report and photos by Kikuchi Takao (Japan)





New York march on Martin Luther King holiday stressed Black-Brown unity.

WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

Larry Holmes on: Globalization,

This report is based on the last part of a talk that WWP Secretariat member Larry Holmes made in Detroit to the local Workers World Party branch at a Feb. 9 meeting on Black History Month.

One of the important political contributions of Comrade Sam Marcy, the founder of Workers World Party who died 10 years ago, is known well by the comrades here in Detroit. That's because Detroit was ground zero for the destruction of the auto and steel industries, the closing of factories, the laying off of thousands of workers.

A quarter of a century ago, Sam—and he was way ahead of his time on this—began to analyze the inevitable social consequences of the introduction of science and technology into capitalist production on a world scale and what has come to be known as globalization.

His assessment was that imperialist globalization, abetted by technology, would create a change in the character of the working class. At first he was looking at this country,

Groups make plans to protest at Republican & Democratic conventions

By Workers World correspondents
Minneapolis, Minn., and Olympia, Wash.

Plans are already underway for protest demonstrations this summer when the two major capitalist parties have their nominating conventions. Two recent conferences in different cities showed the broad range of issues various groups intend to raise when both the Republicans and Democrats meet.

Notable is the fact that unions and organizations of the poor met together with anti-war and anti-imperialist groups, indicating the connections being drawn between the growing economic woes of the working class and the immense outlay of funds by the capitalist government for imperialist aggression abroad.

Republican National Convention

The Republican National Convention (RNC) will be held on Sept. 1-4 in St. Paul, Minn. On Feb. 9-10, in St. Paul's twin city of Minneapolis, the Coalition to March on the RNC and Stop the War met with more than 60 other organizations to plan events protesting the Republican agenda.

The coalition consists of local anti-war and solidarity organizations, unions and social justice groups. Three national anti-war coalitions were also represented at the conference: Troops Out Now Coalition (TONC), the ANSWER Coalition and United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ).

Other organizations present included the International Action Center; Freedom Road Socialist Organization; Latinos Against the War; Fight Imperialism-Stand Together; Students for a Democratic Society; New Jersey Solidarity-Activists for the Liberation of Palestine; the National Committee to Free Ricardo Palmera; Teamsters Local 743 and AFSCME Local 3800.

A press conference for local and national media included speakers from the Coalition to March on the RNC and Stop the War, TONC, UFPJ, ANSWER and the Arab American Action Network.

Phyllis Walker, Marie Braun and Jess Sundin opened the conference with an inspiring welcome from the local coalition. Two panels laid out the many reasons for marching on the RNC.

In the first panel Muath Asamarai, a local Iraqi American; Leslie Cagan of UFPJ; Sara Flounders of TONC and the IAC; John Beacham for the ANSWER Coalition; Carlos Montes of Latinos Against the War; and Angel Buechner from the Welfare Rights Committee spoke on why their organizations and coalitions are mobilizing for the march.

The second panel consisted of representatives from other endorsing organizations, including Richard Berg, president of Teamsters Local 743; Kosta Harlan, a member of Students for a Democratic Society; Hatem Abudayyeh,

executive director of the Arab American Action Network; Tyneisha Bowens, a leader of Fight Imperialism-Stand Together; George Martin of Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice; and Barry Reisch of Veterans for Peace.

These organizations emphasized the importance of opposing the imperialist agendas of both the Republicans and the Democrats.

The diversity of the issues addressed by the Coalition to March on the RNC and Stop the War was reflected in the diversity of the attending organizations and activists. Immigrant rights, Palestine solidarity, Latin American solidarity, welfare rights, labor and low-income struggles were some of the issues included on the agenda and in the planning of the march and other events to counter the RNC.

This respect for diversity was also reflected in the local coalition's open position on various tactics and safe spaces for those not participating in militant actions.

On the second day of the conference, the participants met in plenaries to discuss the program for a major demonstration on Sept. 1 and coordination and communication leading up to the event. Tours were held of the area around the Xcel Center where the RNC will take place in September.

For more information, visit marchonrnc.org or protestrnc2008.org.

Conference on RNC and DNC in Olympia

On the same weekend as the Minneapolis conference, youth and students met in Olympia, Wash., to discuss preparations to counter both the Republican and Democratic national conventions. About 100 people attended, mostly students from Seattle and surrounding areas, with others from Minneapolis and the states of Colorado, Oregon and California. The National Lawyers Guild and a few educators were there to listen, observe and offer advice when asked.

Protest organizers from Minneapolis and from Denver, where the DNC will be held on Aug. 24-28, gave presentations on the preparations that had been made, problems encountered and the significance of the respective conventions.

For the DNC, two activists who are part of the Recreate 68 Alliance spoke. Glenn Spagnuolo of the All Nations Alliance and Larry Hales of the youth group Fight Imperialism-Stand Together (FIST) presented to the audience in the late evening for an hour and a half. Spagnuolo explained that R68 was formed in January last year by local Denver activists from the Latin@, African-American, Native and white communities, representing such different issues as racism, imperialism, anti-war, anti-globalization, for immigrant rights and Indigenous rights. They agreed to work together to create a week of political solidarity in resistance and protest.

The idea of Recreate 68 is being used to move com-

munities forward by looking back at a time of great resistance to war and racism.

Spagnuolo made reference to the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense and its Ten-Point Program, where the party provided security, free breakfasts for children programs and education in many communities.

He also spoke of the government's brutal attacks in response to the party's activism, the anti-war positions of Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X, the mass movements against oppression headed by organizations such as the American Indian Movement, the Young Lords, the Gay Liberation Front and many other groups.

Racism, imperialist war, poverty—all the things that come with capitalism—are still with us, Spagnuolo explained, and though Cointelpro is not around in name, the government has other forms of surveillance and of targeting activists, such as the massive Homeland Security apparatus.

Larry Hales of FIST spoke about the numerous cases of police brutality in the Denver area, such as the case of Loree McCormick-Rice and her then-12-year-old daughter Cassidy McCormick, who were both beaten by an Aurora, Colo., cop. He spoke of the occupation of the oppressed communities by police and the role of police in capitalist society.

Hales asked the students to be mindful of the communities and the people whom they are claiming to represent. The residents of communities of color are faced with police terror all the time, not just during marches and rallies. Police brutality is a daily reality for many working and oppressed people.

He told them that they must be sensitive to the needs of the people and be aware of history that is being made today. For instance, Hales said, a white woman and a Black man are running for president. Though they both represent the interests of the imperialist U.S. ruling class and their agenda would be to appease the ruling elite, there are many oppressed people who see the fact that they are running and that one or the other may likely win the general election as a milestone.

People will be out in the streets for many reasons, and activists have to keep focused on the issues while at the same time being aware that some people are looking at these candidates as a victory for women and Black people. It will take time for them to see what the development really means, as the next president goes about her or his business running the U.S. imperialist colossus.

A whole week of activities, rallies and marches is planned for the DNC by Recreate 68. To find out about them, visit recreate68.org.

Tyneisha Bowens, who attended the Minneapolis conference, and Gloria Verdieu and Larry Hales, who attended the Olympia conference, contributed to this article.

, economic crisis & Obama

but really it could be extrapolated worldwide, that the character of the working class would change in a revolutionary way. Up to the fore would come women and Black and Latin@ people in service jobs, low-wage or non-union jobs. And that would be the basis for a more revolutionary working class, a working class that did not have the baggage of chauvinism, jingoism, xenophobia, racism and sexism. They would not be fearful of their sisters and brothers on other continents around the world.

The working class would be globalized. More and more workers all over the world would look like each other and speak different languages and the distance culturally and politically between Johannesburg or Thailand and New York City and even Detroit would not be so great.

One of the biggest symptoms of globalization is immigrant workers coming on the scene and bringing back May Day. There was no way the U.S. labor leaders were going to bring back May Day. They crushed it.

Immigrant workers began organizing for the big May Day uprising in 2006. The party was working very closely with them around the country. What finally happened was probably the biggest one-day strike this country has ever seen. Docks closed down, industries closed down. But top union leaders couldn't deal with May Day. They had offered to give immigrant organizers buses, infrastructure, if they would just have it two weeks later.

The immigrant organizers said no. They didn't have those hang-ups.

Sam saw the emergence of this revolutionized global working class. And the bourgeoisie saw it coming in so many ways, too. And for a long time one of their big objectives has been to undermine it, subvert it.

We see on the horizon the biggest capitalist crisis since the 1930s. Many people think we're in uncharted waters. The only thing you can compare it to is the thirties because everybody knows that was a worldwide depression. But we shall see.

The mortgage foreclosures and the banks writing off billions of dollars are the tip of the iceberg. Bankers and governments are meeting around the clock here, in Europe, in Asia—and not to stave off a recession. They have had recessions before. It is to stave off a collapse of the capitalist financial system. It is to save banks from going under like a house of cards. That is what they are concerned about.

The crisis of the financial system is happening at a time when there's also a crisis of overproduction and the crisis of U.S. imperialism losing its hegemonic position in the world. To make things even more complicated for the imperialists, there is this war they can't get out of. No matter how many times they say the surge is going well, they are still bogged down.

The question is, what will the workers do? What will the unions do? Will they stand up and fight these attacks or will they somehow be undone and allow the imperialists a big victory?

That is why we talk about Black and Brown unity. It's a catch phrase for the Black community's relationship to the immigrant and particularly the Latin@ community. The ruling class conspires to divide the Black community from the Latin@ immigrant community. If these communities were together on a class basis in this country, the gravity of that unity would pull in the whites. Everybody would be clear that what was going on has a lot to do with race and class.

And it is so important because if they can divide Black and Brown then it will be easier for the government to make those raids.

They just raided a plant in Los Angeles yesterday with two or three hundred workers. Last week they raided a union hall in Connecticut. This should have set off alarm bells throughout the labor movement.

This is clearly an attack on the working class. This is union busting.

In my neck of the woods, we have an organizing drive at FreshDirect—people who deliver food to you. Hundreds of workers, primarily immigrants. All of a sudden the immigrant police arrive and hundreds of workers had to leave their belongings, leave their jobs and go undercover. It is union busting.

It is the reason why on the Martin Luther King holiday in New York, in freezing weather, we organized a demonstration of over a thousand people.

We marched from the radio station that currently broadcasts Don Imus, who was kicked off the air for



Larry Holmes

WW PHOTO:
MONICA MOOREHEAD

his racist sexist dis last spring. That was an issue of primary concern to the Black community, but also to women and progressives. We marched from there to CNN to target Lou Dobbs, who six nights a week bashes immigrants on this mainstream, worldwide television network.

All this should be making our class more militant, more class conscious, more internationalist, more understanding that they can't fight their sisters and brothers, whether they be in India or China or in Mexico or down South.

On the other hand are the setbacks and defeats, the opportunism of most of the big labor leaders. Some are corrupt bureaucrats—you can't say two good words about them. Some have a deeper problem: they have lost the will to fight because they don't believe they can win anymore. They feel that capitalism is so strong that the best they can do is make a deal to save a little here and a little there. But somehow we've got to push that back.

Who the hell is John Edwards? He's a charlatan, this rich lawyer who gets \$400 haircuts and all of a sudden is going to be a champion of the working class. But he decided his best chance of running for president in the Democratic primaries was to have a populist approach and start talking about the corporations and the poor and workers' rights and start finding picket lines to walk on. And the media and the bourgeoisie made a decision not to cover him, don't help him—don't do anything that helps anybody develop a class perspective. Help something else, anything else—any other diversion.

That is why in some respects we have Obama. Obama is complicated. There are some interesting things to say about the Obama phenomenon.

Let's face it, in this country where racism is so strong, so systemic and so knee-jerk, to see a handsome Black man with a name like Barack Hussein Obama winning primaries, before you even analyze it politically, part of you is saying, damn, that's pretty good.

Moreover we can understand why a lot of progressive people and certainly a lot of Black people would feel good about it. They feel proud and rightfully so, because of national oppression and racism.

But Obama is not Jesse Jackson. It is not that Jesse Jackson was ever a revolutionary. It is just that there is a world of difference in where Jesse Jackson's election campaigns came from in '84 and '88 and where Obama's campaign comes from.

Jesse Jackson's campaign was a protest campaign, it was to protest racism and the lack of representation inside the Democratic Party. The revolutionary wing of the Jackson movement, as some of you recall, was hoping that after Jackson was spurned he would lead Black people out of the Democratic Party. That didn't happen. Jackson stayed in because he stayed bourgeois.

But his campaign was a movement and it was fascinating to watch. Jackson was never concerned about women's rights—that's not where he came from. But he realized as he was building his movement that if he was going to get the whole working class behind him he had to become very interested in women's rights and get the women's movement out.

I don't think he was particularly concerned with workers' rights. But he realized that if he was going to pull people together, he would have to get together with the most progressive activists in unions. That made his movement a class movement in both '84 and '88.

Barack's movement is a bourgeois movement. It was conceived of as a bourgeois movement and financed by

Wall Street—Goldman Sachs in particular. You could interchange the advisers, whether on foreign policy or the economy, that Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton has with Barack Obama. It's all about the same.

He raised more money last month. Some of that money may be coming from the poor, but most of it is coming from the bourgeoisie. So it is a bourgeois phenomenon. He's running to the right of Jackson. He's not running for a protest, he's not running for inclusion, he's not running for representation.

He's running saying, "Race doesn't matter, class doesn't matter. Let's all be together." This wonderful nice dream.

They are not covering Cynthia McKinney that much. This is very interesting. It is a problem; it's tragic, but we'll do the best we can by it.

Cynthia McKinney, a former congresswoman, served several terms in the House before she was kicked out the first time, and at least one after she got back in and was kicked out again. She's running for president with a fairly progressive program tied to the Reconstruction Party, which comes out of the Gulf.

She's way ahead of anything that Obama is saying, way ahead of anything that Kucinich or any of the other bourgeois party candidates have been saying. Not one press conference. Not one article. Not one mention of her.

She wrote a critique of Obama. It is a little dated now but it still holds. It hit what a lot of Black activists were really concerned about in terms of the Obama campaign.

It said, Wait a second. Don't say stuff that gives the impression that racism is no longer a problem. Don't say stuff that makes people forget about the Jena 6 and forget about Katrina, and the fact that more of our youth are incarcerated than in college.

Don't say stuff that lets people forget the fact that on every scale Black people are doing worse. Double unemployment, more of us are dying, more of us living shorter lives; we live in worse housing; we get worse health care.

How does doing that help the struggle against racism? It might make people feel good—even right wingers. "We're so glad he doesn't see race."

His campaign is a problem for serious leftists or revolutionaries. But I think inevitably it will be more helpful than harmful.

Right now, things have been so difficult, almost anything that shakes things up is beneficial, because at least Obama has a lot of people thinking and talking and debating, particularly all these white people.

Bush has so alienated the world. He's created a country at war with everybody—Latin America, Arabs,

Muslims. Some people are voting for Obama as a way of trying to tell the world that we don't hate them.

Bush has so horrified everybody that this is a reaction to it.

The Obama campaign shakes things up. Campaigns like Obama's create expectations, but ultimately those expectations cannot be met,

and then it is time for struggle. Actually that contradiction may come sooner than later because, as bourgeois as Obama is and as much as even a lot of right wingers say they like him, it is still a question: Do you think the imperialist ruling class will let a Black man be president of the United States?

If I was a part of that class and we were having a meeting at one of the mansions, I'd say, "Let him become president. Why? Because we're going to have hell, we're going to have an economic crisis, we're in trouble. Once we have to take away Social Security and what's left of Medicare and Medicaid, which you know we're going to have to do if no one stops us, let it be him doing it!"

We are absolutely obligated to set up as strongly and widely as possible political and movement counterpoints to this bourgeois electoral stuff.

The layoffs are starting now. When manufacturing is down, they say we're relying on retail. Heard the latest reports? Retail is in recession. People who thought they were middle class losing jobs, losing homes.

We have to be in the most serious period of preparation for the struggle that is on the horizon. □

Battle for reparations

Review of World Conference Against Racism

“Any time you find the government involved in a conspiracy to violate the citizenship or the civil rights of a people, then you are wasting your time going to that government expecting redress. Instead, you have to take that government to the World Court (United Nations) and accuse it of genocide and all of the other crimes that it is guilty of today.

“So those of us whose political, and economic and social philosophy is Black Nationalism have become involved in the civil rights struggle. We have injected ourselves into the civil rights struggle, and we intend to expand it from the level of civil rights to the level of human rights. As long as you’re fighting on the level of civil rights, you’re under Uncle Sam’s jurisdiction. You’re going to his court expecting him to correct the problem. He created the problem. He’s the criminal. You don’t take your case to the criminal; you take your criminal to court.”

—Malcolm X



By Roger Wareham

Attention All African People!!! The U.N. has agreed to hold a review of the 2001 U.N. World Conference Against Racism held in South Africa. On April 21st, a Preparatory Committee meeting for this review will be held. You need to be there. To understand why this Durban review is important to all Black people and our struggle for reparations, some background is necessary.

In the early morning hours of Sept. 8, 2001, in Durban, South Africa, African people achieved an historic victory. The United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR) adopted a Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) recognizing that the “Trans-Atlantic slavery and slave trade was a crime against humanity.” The first international acknowledgment of an historical truth was the result of a nearly decade-long battle waged by the December 12th Movement International Secretariat and a few other NGOs (nongovernmental

organizations) to maintain racism as a human rights issue within the U.N.

Following the release of Nelson Mandela from 26 years of prison in apartheid South Africa, the Western countries, fearing that the spotlight would be turned on their own racist foundations and practices, fought to have racism eliminated as an item from the agenda of the Commission on Human Rights.

Since 1989, the December 12th Movement, an organization which arose from the grassroots Black community’s struggle to defend our human rights, had been carrying out Malcolm’s mandate to bring our situation to the international community by regular participation at the U.N. human rights bodies in Geneva, Switzerland, and New York City. In 1993, at the U.N. World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, Austria, we called for the U.N. to convene a World Conference Against Racism. But it was not until December 1997 that the U.N. General Assembly agreed to do so in 2001.

After the General Assembly approved the conference,

D12 outlined what we saw as three key issues to its success: 1) a declaration that the trans-Atlantic slave trade, slavery and colonialism were crimes against humanity; 2) acknowledgment of the economic basis of racism; 3) reparations for the victims. Over the next four years D12 successfully helped organize NGOs of African people from around the Diaspora who planned to participate in the WCAR to put these issues at the top of their list of demands.

At the same time, understanding that it was the member countries of the U.N. who would actually pass a Declaration and Program of Action, we lobbied the U.N. Regional Groupings, particularly the African Group of countries, to support these demands. The African Group’s statement, the Dakar Declaration, addressed all the issues. From the beginning, the Western European and Other (WEO) Group of countries, which includes the U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand, recognized the threat these issues posed to the maintenance of white supremacy and their dominant role in the world.

WEO launched a campaign of manipulation, bureaucracy, threats and economic intimidation to force the rest of the world to back off these issues. D12, along with the National Black United Front (NBUF), organized a 400-member delegation, “The Durban 400,” to attend the WCAR. Our focus was not on the NGO Forum, which was running parallel to the WCAR, but on the conference of states.

The Durban 400 lobbied relentlessly, making it clear to every country there the importance of the three issues. African Diaspora NGOs from around the world pushed their countries as well. This grassroots organizing effort helped counter the Western onslaught on the developing countries which represent the majority of the world. The U.S. delegation, seeing that their campaign to derail African people’s demands had failed, walked out of the WCAR.

U.N. World Conference Declarations and Action Programs are decided by consensus, not majority vote. So while the developed world didn’t back down on every issue, the final DDPA was a compromise document. The crimes against humanity, excepting colonialism, were recognized. The language speaks to reparations without clearly calling it that. And it alludes to the economic base of racism.

So Durban represented an important victory for African people. However the momentum from that victory was derailed just two days later by the attacks of 9/11. The WEO Group grabbed the “terrorism” concerns arising out of 9/11 as an opportunity to put WCAR, the DDPA and its implications on hold and out of the world’s consciousness.

The Durban Review is our chance to make the demands of African people primary once again. The December 12th Movement and its companion NGO, the International Association Against Torture, just returned from attending a meeting in Geneva of the Working Group on People of African Descent (WGPAD).

The WGPAD was established by the DDPA and is the only U.N. body exclusively concerned with people of African descent. At the meeting, there were only three NGOs present from the entire Americas. We successfully lobbied to have the WGPAD recommend that reparations be an agenda item for the Durban Review. Predictably this was the only WGPAD recommendation which came under attack from the WEO, who were represented by Germany and Belgium. They said its inclusion would threaten the whole review and might force them to pull out. The African Group made it clear that they had learned from their Durban error and insisted that it be in. The WGPAD included it.

The first substantive international Preparatory Meeting for the Durban Review Conference will be held in Geneva from April 21 to May 2. We must be there in force to lobby for and protect our interests. Malcolm is watching.

Roger Wareham is a New York attorney who helped to introduce a class action lawsuit demanding reparations on behalf of African Americans in 2002.

Free Rev. Pinkney!

A fighter against racist gentrification

By Cheryl LaBash
Detroit

Racist injustice won’t go unanswered on March 7 when supporters of Rev. Edward Pinkney fill the Berrien County Courthouse to demand his freedom. Pinkney is currently enduring overcrowded and unsanitary conditions in the Berrien County Jail in the latest attempt to silence him.

The Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice (MECAWI) and the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization plan bus transportation from Detroit to the hearing.

Berrien Chief Judge Al Butzbaugh dragged Pinkney to jail in December 2007 for quoting scripture that calls down a curse on dishonest judiciary. Butzbaugh claimed he and his family were personally threatened. Butzbaugh now has reportedly withdrawn himself from future hearings on Pinkney’s case because he is the complainant.

Another reason to remove Butzbaugh from any legal actions involving the 58-year-old human rights activist and to release Pinkney immediately is now coming to light. Judge Butzbaugh appears to have close and long-standing ties to a son of the founders of Whirlpool Corp., the multinational appliance manufacturer headquartered in Benton Harbor, Mich.

A 1991 annual report posted on the state of Michigan website for the “Law & Title Building Condominium Association” lists Alfred M. Butzbaugh and David F. Upton as corporate officers.

Rev. Pinkney regularly exposed racism in the Berrien County courts. But he went too far for the local ruling class when he organized the successful recall of Benton Harbor City Commissioner-at-large Glenn Yarbrough in 2005. Yarbrough was viewed as pivotal to rubber-stamping approval for the half-billion-dollar Harbor Shores upscale housing and retail development, including a Jack Nicklaus golf course.

According to a Feb. 14 Western Michigan Business Review online article, “Work Continues on Harbor Shores Site,” three organizations co-own the Harbor Shores developer. They are Cornerstone Alliance, Alliance for World-Class Communities and Whirlpool Foundation. According to the Whirlpool corporate Web site, Cornerstone Alliance is also funded by Whirlpool.

Rev. Pinkney was charged with voter fraud—which he



Rev. Edward Pinkney

Photo: Abayomi Azikiwe

denied—and the election attempt to recall Yarbrough was overturned. Pinkney’s first trial ended in a deadlock but he was convicted in a second trial by an all-white jury. Benton Harbor, Pinkney’s home, is 90 percent African-American. That decision is now in the appeal process.

In an interview published in the February-March edition of Critical Moment, Rev. Pinkney explained: “We were still fighting them taking over the city of Benton Harbor—Whirlpool, Harbor Shores, planning commissioners, Cornerstone Alliance. They were all working together against the people that live inside the city; so their whole plan was to drive the people of Benton Harbor out of the city. We did everything we could to stop them.”

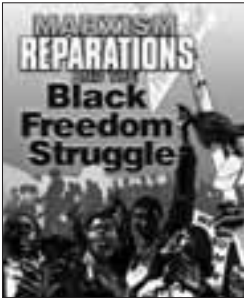
MECAWI is organizing transportation to Pinkney’s hearing in Benton Harbor on March 7. Those wishing to go and stand up to racist gentrification and state repression can call MECAWI at 313-680-5508. □

Marxism, Reparations & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper. Edited by Monica Moorehead. Includes:

- Black liberation & the working-class struggle • The material basis for reparations in the U.S.
- Brief overview of racist oppression & heroic resistance • What Hurricane Katrina exposed to the world
- Africa: A battleground against colonialism and for sovereignty • Justice for the Caribbean
- Greeting to the 3rd UN World Conference against Racism from Mumia Abu-Jamal, 2001
- A salute to women revolutionaries • Why fight-back is inevitable • Black labor and class solidarity

Order online from www.Leftbooks.com



GRAPHIC: SAHU BARRON

Kosovo’s ‘independence’ Washington gets new colony in the Balkans

By Sara Flounders

In evaluating the recent “declaration of independence” by Kosovo, a province of Serbia, and its immediate recognition as a state by the U.S., Germany, Britain and France, it is important to know three things.

First, Kosovo is not gaining independence or even minimal self-government. It will be run by an appointed High Representative and bodies appointed by the U.S., European Union and NATO. An old-style colonial viceroy and imperialist administrators will have control over foreign and domestic policy. U.S. imperialism has merely consolidated its direct control of a totally dependent colony in the heart of the Balkans.

Second, Washington’s immediate recognition of Kosovo confirms once again that U.S. imperialism will break any and every treaty or international agreement it has ever signed, including agreements it drafted and imposed by force and violence on others.

The recognition of Kosovo is in direct violation of such law—specifically U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244, which the leaders of Yugoslavia were forced to sign to end the 78 days of NATO bombing of their country in 1999. Even this imposed agreement affirmed the “commitment of all Member States to the sovereignty and territorial integrity” of Serbia, a republic of Yugoslavia.

This week’s illegal recognition of Kosovo was condemned by Serbia, Russia, China and Spain.

Thirdly, U.S. imperialist domination does not benefit the occupied people. Kosovo after nine years of direct NATO military occupation has a staggering 60 percent unemployment rate. It has become a center of the international drug trade and of prostitution rings in Europe.

The once humming mines, mills, smelters, refining centers and railroads of this small resource-rich industrial area all sit silent. The resources of Kosovo under NATO occupation were forcibly privatized and sold to giant Western multinational corporations. Now almost the only employment is working for the U.S./NATO army of occupation or U.N. agencies.

The only major construction in Kosovo is of Camp Bondsteel, the largest U.S. base built in Europe in a generation. Halliburton, of course, got the contract for the camp guards and the strategic oil and transportation lines of the entire region.

Over 250,000 Serbian, Romani and other nationalities have been driven out of this Serbian province since it came under U.S./NATO control. Almost a quarter of the Albanian population has been forced to leave in order to find work.

Establishing a colonial administration

Consider the plan under which Kosovo’s “independence” is to happen. Not only does it violate U.N. resolutions but it is also a total colonial structure. It is similar to the absolute power held by L. Paul Bremer in the first two years of the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

How did this colonial plan come about? It was proposed by the same forces responsible for the breakup of Yugoslavia and the NATO bombing and occupation of Kosovo.

In June of 2005, U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan appointed former Finnish President Marti Ahtisaari as his special envoy to lead the negotiations on Kosovo’s final status. Ahtisaari is hardly a neutral

arbitrator when it comes to U.S. intervention in Kosovo. He is chairman emeritus of the International Crisis Group (ICG), an organization funded by multimillionaire George Soros that promotes NATO expansion and intervention along with open markets for U.S. and E.U. investment.

The board of the ICG includes two key U.S. officials responsible for the bombing of Kosovo: Gen. Wesley Clark and Zbigniew Brzezinski. In March 2007, Ahtisaari gave his Comprehensive Proposal for Kosovo Status Settlement to the new U.N. Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon.

The documents setting out the new government for Kosovo are available at unosek.org/unosek/en/statusproposal.html. A summary is available on the U.S. State Department’s Web site at state.gov/p/eur/rls/fs/100058.htm

An International Civilian Representative (ICR) will be appointed by U.S. and E.U. officials to oversee Kosovo. This appointed official can overrule any measures, annul any laws and remove anyone from office in Kosovo. The ICR will have full and final control over the departments of Customs, Taxation, Treasury and Banking.

The E.U. will establish a European Security and Defense Policy Mission (ESDP) and NATO will establish an International Military Presence. Both these appointed bodies will have control over foreign policy, security, police, judiciary, all courts and prisons. They are guaranteed immediate and complete access to any activity, proceeding or document in Kosovo.

These bodies and the ICR will have final say over what crimes can be prosecuted and against whom; they can reverse or annul any decision made. The largest prison in Kosovo is at the U.S. base, Camp Bondsteel, where prisoners are held without charges, judicial overview or representation.

The recognition of Kosovo’s “independence” is just the latest step in a U.S. war of reconquest that has been relentlessly pursued for decades.

Divide and rule

The Balkans has been a vibrant patchwork of many oppressed nationalities, cultures and religions. The Socialist Federation of Yugoslavia, formed after World War II, contained six republics, none of which had a majority. Yugoslavia was born with a heritage of antagonisms that had been endlessly exploited by the Ottoman Turks, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and interference by British and French imperialism, followed by Nazi German and Italian Fascist occupation in World War II.

The Jewish and Serbian peoples suffered the greatest losses in that war. A powerful communist-led resistance movement made up of all the nationalities, which had suffered in different ways, was forged against Nazi occupation and all outside intervention. After the liberation, all the nationalities cooperated and compromised in building the new socialist federation.

In 45 years the Socialist Federation of Yugoslavia developed from an impoverished, underdeveloped, feuding region into a stable country with an industrial base, full literacy and health care for the whole population.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, the Pentagon immediately laid plans for the aggressive expansion of NATO into the East. Divide and rule became U.S. policy throughout the entire region. Everywhere right-wing,

pro-capitalist forces were financed and encouraged. As the Soviet Union was broken up into separate, weakened, unstable and feuding republics, the Socialist Federation of Yugoslavia tried to resist this reactionary wave.

In 1991, while world attention was focused on the devastating U.S. bombing of Iraq, Washington encouraged, financed and armed right-wing separatist movements in the Croatian, Slovenian and Bosnian republics of the Yugoslav Federation. In violation of international agreements Germany and the U.S. gave quick recognition to these secessionist movements and approved the creation of several capitalist ministates.

At the same time U.S. finance capital imposed severe economic sanctions on Yugoslavia to bankrupt its economy. Washington then promoted NATO as the only force able to bring stability to the region.

The arming and financing of the right-wing UCK movement in the Serbian province of Kosovo began in this same period. Kosovo was not a distinct republic within the Yugoslav Federation but a province in the Serbian Republic. Historically, it had been a center of Serbian national identity, but with a growing Albanian population.

Washington initiated a wild propaganda campaign claiming that Serbia was carrying out a campaign of massive genocide against the Albanian majority in Kosovo. The Western media was full of stories of mass graves and brutal rapes. U.S. officials claimed that from 100,000 up to 500,000 Albanians had been massacred.

U.S./NATO officials under the Clinton administration issued an outrageous ultimatum that Serbia immediately accept military occupation and surrender all sovereignty or face NATO bombardment of its cities, towns and infrastructure. When, at a negotiation session in Rambouillet, France, the Serbian Parliament voted to refuse NATO’s demands, the bombing began.

In 78 days the Pentagon dropped

35,000 cluster bombs, used thousands of rounds of radioactive depleted-uranium rounds, along with bunker busters and cruise missiles. The bombing destroyed more than 480 schools, 33 hospitals, numerous health clinics, 60 bridges, along with industrial, chemical and heating plants, and the electrical grid. Kosovo, the region that Washington was supposedly determined to liberate, received the greatest destruction.

Finally on June 3, 1999, Yugoslavia was forced to agree to a ceasefire and the occupation of Kosovo.

Expecting to find bodies everywhere, forensic teams from 17 NATO countries organized by the Hague Tribunal on War Crimes searched occupied Kosovo all summer of 1999 but found a total of only 2,108 bodies, of all nationalities. Some had been killed by NATO bombing and some in the war between the UCK and the Serbian police and military. They found not one mass grave and could produce no evidence of massacres or of “genocide.”

This stunning rebuttal of the imperialist propaganda comes from a report released by the chief prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, Carla Del Ponte. It was covered, but without fanfare, in the New York Times of Nov. 11, 1999.

The wild propaganda of genocide and tales of mass graves were as false as the later claims that Iraq had and was preparing to use “weapons of mass destruction.”

Through war, assassinations, coups and economic strangulation, Washington has succeeded for now in imposing neoliberal economic policies on all of the six former Yugoslav republics and breaking them into unstable and impoverished ministates.

The very instability and wrenching poverty that imperialism has brought to the region will in the long run be the seeds of its undoing. The history of the achievements made when Yugoslavia enjoyed real independence and sovereignty through unity and socialist development will assert itself in the future. □



P.R. teachers demand contract

Tens of thousands of teachers and other unionists marched to the governor’s mansion in San Juan, Puerto Rico, on Feb. 17 to demand that the government resume talks with the teachers’ union over their demand for higher wages and better conditions.

Starting salary for teachers on the island is less than \$20,000 a year, even though prices are higher than in many parts of the United States, which has ruled over Puerto Rico for more than a century.

The teachers are threatening to strike if the government walks out of negotiations again. The colonial government in Puerto Rico has imposed a no-strike law on school employees.

—Report and photo by Arturo Pérez-Saad



Fidel’s message

The poisonous hatred of the ruling class and all its minions for the great bulk of humanity whom they oppress, exploit, scorn and abuse can always be seen in the undiluted, personalized venom they pour out upon those who lead the people in struggle.

That seems to be particularly true when these leaders are people who turned their backs on a life of comfort to join forces with the hungry, the tortured, the dispossessed. Such a person is Fidel Castro.

He has never wavered in his commitment to revolutionary transformation, not just in Cuba but wherever there is misery and oppression. And the U.S. exploiters of Latin America and much of the rest of the world have never wavered in heaping their lies, calumnies and epithets upon Fidel. Yet he remains one of the most popular political figures in the world, and is especially beloved in his native Cuba.

Fidel Castro is now 81 and, after leading an incredibly energetic and full life, has suffered ill health over the last two years. He has decided to focus his great mental strength on communicating his analysis of current events through his writing and will no longer be a candidate for president of Cuba in the future.

He has thoughtfully and gracefully communicated this to the Cuban people and the world in the following message, which we reproduce here in full:

Message from the Commander in Chief

Dear compatriots:

Last Friday, Feb. 15, I promised you that in my next reflection I would deal with an issue of interest to many compatriots. Thus, this now is rather a message.

The moment has come to nominate and elect the State Council, its President, its Vice-Presidents and Secretary.

For many years I have occupied the honorable position of President. On Feb. 15, 1976, the Socialist Constitution was approved with the free, direct and secret vote of over 95 percent of the people with the right to cast a vote. The first National Assembly was established on Dec. 2 that same year; this elected the State Council and its presidency. Before that, I had been a Prime Minister for almost 18 years. I always had the necessary prerogatives to carry forward the revolutionary work with the support of the overwhelming majority of the people.

There were those overseas who, aware of my critical health condition, thought that my provisional resignation, on July 31, 2006, to the position of President of the State Council, which I left to First Vice-President Raul Castro Ruz, was final. But Raul, who is also minister of the Armed Forces on account of his own personal merits, and the other comrades of the Party and State leadership were unwilling to consider me out of public life despite my unstable health condition.

It was an uncomfortable situation for me vis-à-vis an adversary which had done everything possible to get rid of me, and I felt reluctant to comply.

Later, in my necessary retreat, I was able to recover the full command of my mind as well as the possibility for much reading and meditation. I had enough physical strength to write for many hours, which I shared with the corresponding rehabilitation and recovery programs. Basic common sense indicated that such activity was within my reach. On the other hand, when referring to my health I was extremely careful to avoid raising expectations since I felt that an adverse ending would bring traumatic news to our people in the midst of the battle. Thus, my first duty was to prepare our people both politically and psychologically for my absence after so many years of struggle. I kept saying that my recovery “was not without risks.”

My wishes have always been to discharge my

duties to my last breath. That’s all I can offer.

To my dearest compatriots, who have recently honored me so much by electing me a member of the Parliament where so many agreements should be adopted of utmost importance to the destiny of our Revolution, I am saying that I will neither aspire to nor accept, I repeat, I will neither aspire to nor accept the positions of President of the State Council and Commander in Chief.

In short letters addressed to Randy Alonso, Director of the Round Table National TV Program—letters which at my request were made public—I discreetly introduced elements of this message I am writing today, when not even the addressee of such letters was aware of my intention. I trusted Randy, whom I knew very well from his days as a student of Journalism. In those days I met almost on a weekly basis with the main representatives of the University students from the provinces at the library of the large house in Kohly where they lived. Today, the entire country is an immense University.

Following are some paragraphs chosen from the letter addressed to Randy on Dec. 17, 2007:

“I strongly believe that the answers to the current problems facing Cuban society, which has, as an average, a twelfth grade of education, almost a million university graduates, and a real possibility for all its citizens to become educated without their being in any way discriminated against, require more variables for each concrete problem than those contained in a chess game. We cannot ignore one single detail; this is not an easy path to take, if the intelligence of a human being in a revolutionary society is to prevail over instinct.

“My elemental duty is not to cling to positions, much less to stand in the way of younger persons, but rather to contribute my own experience and ideas whose modest value comes from the exceptional era that I had the privilege of living in.

“Like Niemeyer, I believe that one has to be consistent right up to the end.”

Letter from Jan. 8, 2008:

“I am a firm supporter of the united vote (a principle that preserves the unknown merits), which allowed us to avoid the tendency to copy what came to us from countries of the former socialist bloc, including the portrait of the one candidate, as singular as his solidarity towards Cuba. I deeply respect that first attempt at building socialism, thanks to which we were able to continue along the path we had chosen.”

And I reiterated in that letter that “I never forget that ‘all of the world’s glory fits in a kernel of corn.”

Therefore, it would be a betrayal to my conscience to accept a responsibility requiring more mobility and dedication than I am physically able to offer. This I say devoid of all drama.

Fortunately, our Revolution can still count on cadres from the old guard and others who were very young in the early stages of the process. Some were very young, almost children, when they joined the fight on the mountains and later they have given glory to the country with their heroic performance and their internationalist missions. They have the authority and the experience to guarantee the replacement. There is also the intermediate generation which learned together with us the basics of the complex and almost unattainable art of organizing and leading a revolution.

The path will always be difficult and require from everyone’s intelligent effort. I distrust the seemingly easy path of apologetics or its antithesis, the self-flagellation. We should always be prepared for the worst variable. The principle of being as prudent in success as steady in adversity cannot be forgotten. The adversary to be defeated is extremely strong; however, we have been able to keep it at bay for half a century.

This is not my farewell to you. My only wish is to fight as a soldier in the battle of ideas. I shall continue to write under the heading of “Reflections by comrade Fidel.” It will be just another weapon you can count on. Perhaps my voice will be heard. I shall be careful.

Thanks.

Fidel Castro Ruz

Feb. 18, 2008

Workers World in 1965

Editor’s note: Workers World is in its 50th year of publication. Throughout the year, we intend to share with our readers some of the paper’s content over the past half century. The following article was originally published in the issue dated Feb. 25, 1965—four days after the shooting of popular Black Muslim leader Malcolm X during a rally at the Audubon Ballroom in New York. Malcolm was for Black self-determination and self-defense and was opposed to the war in Vietnam waged by the U.S. government.

Malcolm was killed by the racist masters of the USA

They are same ones who assassinated Lumumba and same ones whom Malcolm fought all his life

Workers World, Feb. 25, 1965

The bullet that stilled the voice of Brother Malcolm X came from the arsenal of imperialist white supremacy. No matter whose was the hand that pulled the trigger, the missile was guided by the same sinister forces who assassinated Patrice Lumumba and his heroic lieutenants in the Congo.

The vicious perpetrators of the most sadistic violence against the Black People have struck again—and this time at a most vital spot. They have struck again, while their class brothers of press and radio hold up their hands and moralize about “violence”—not the violence of the assassins, but the alleged violence of their victim!

The ruling class that boasts of the greatest array of violence in the history of mankind, the class that has not hesitated to use that violence on the disarmed and the helpless throughout the earth, has struck again—and at one of its most important individual targets.

Malcolm was a leader of the oppressed, one who called for self-defense against the violence of the oppressor and organized the masses with a view to standing up against this violence and ultimately beating it.

Like [Congolese leader Patrice] Lumumba, he had to be removed. The imperialists will let nothing stand in the way of their drive to rule whatever portion of the earth they can. And the time they could do this peacefully or “democratically”—if it ever did exist—is now long past.

The government has failed to quench the fires of the Black Freedom movement with the tepid milk-and-water “civil rights law.” It has failed to bribe the movement’s real leaders. It has failed to beat the movement into submission—either in Alabama or in Brooklyn or Harlem. So it has taken the path of provocation, conspiracy, frame-up—and assassination.

It cannot dispose of the *ideas* of the most militant leaders of the oppressed, so it must try to eliminate their *persons*.

The depraved, sadistic stooges of the ruling class have been murdering the lesser-known, unsung heroes of the oppressed for centuries. But now the U.S. racist masters have gone in for murdering the leaders.

The ruling class has even launched upon a program of *government by assassination* because its own ranks are torn by the upward thrust of the oppressed peoples.

In the case of John F. Kennedy and [U.N. Secretary General] Dag Hammarskjold, the assassinations were directed at a so-called “moderate” wing of the *oppressor* class. In Malcolm’s case, it was directed at a militant wing of the *oppressed* class.

In both cases, the racist, militarist rulers of the United States have the same aim—to

divide and rule the masses and to set the country more firmly on the road to war.

The Kennedy assassination revealed the extreme instability of the ruling class and its tendency to resort to the most violent solutions in its internal faction fights. Even before this, the mysterious death of Dag Hammarskjold in a plane accident while he was apparently pursuing a too “mild” line in the Congo raised strong suspicions in Europe and Africa that the CIA had really arranged his demise.

But the assassination of Malcolm reveals, like the phony “Statue of Liberty bomb plot,” that far more is now afoot within the country than just a faction fight of the big bosses. The intrigues, frame-ups, wiretaps and conspiracies against the oppressed that have become so commonplace, have given way to bursts of police violence, clubbings, shootings—and assassinations.

We live under such a system and are ruled by such brigands that it is inevitable that, frustrated by failure with other methods, they unleash the kind of violence Malcolm often exposed before he fell victim to.

The papers, as usual, turn everything upside down. Malcolm was fond of saying that they invariably make the criminal look like the victim and the victim appear to be the criminal. So it is with Malcolm’s own death.

Every single editorial writer for the imperialist racists has managed to say in one way or another that Malcolm “died as he had lived—by violence” or that he “lived by the sword and he died by the sword,” etc. It might almost be as though it was *Malcolm* who had assassinated someone, rather than the other way around, so persuasively do these highly paid agents of the racist ruling class write their obituaries.

One might almost think that these meek and gentle newspapers were not absolutely foaming at the mouth over a few youngsters in Harlem last summer. One might almost think that they all stood up in union to condemn Officer Gilligan and ask his removal from the Force for his act of murderous violence against a 15-year-old boy!

The hypocrisy and the lies are hard to expose. Malcolm’s murder is being covered up by the very same forces that murdered him—the racist rulers and their penmen, policemen and politicians. But murder *will* out. The real murderers *will* be brought to justice.

And Malcolm’s struggle for the line of militant self-defense of the Black People against the violence of imperialism will be vindicated, not least of all, by his own martyrdom. □

Australia PM says ‘Sorry’

Continued from page 11

of Native Title, a right of ownership for the Aboriginal communities living on the land.

Eddie Mabo was a Torres Strait Islander, a group that is culturally akin to the people living in Papua New Guinea and is distinct from the other Aboriginal groups in Australia. Mabo proved that his forebears had always lived on the lands he was claiming.

The Aboriginal people have occupied Australia for over 40,000 years and survived over 200 years of genocidal attacks from England and its colonizers. They deserve not only an apology but reparations to make them and their communities whole, safe and prosperous. □

A liberation hero to Lebanese masses

Thousands mourn Hezbollah military leader

By John Catalinotto

Tens of thousands of people gathered in Beirut, the Lebanese capital, on Feb. 14 to praise and mourn Hezbollah military commander Imad Mughniyeh, who had been assassinated in Damascus, Syria, two days earlier.

In contrast to this massive sympathetic outpouring of Lebanese people, the corporate media and imperialist officials, especially in the U.S., have denounced Mughniyeh as a “master terrorist.” But this is how the oppressors have viewed every military leader of the oppressed, from the rebel slave Spartacus in ancient Rome to Nat Turner and beyond.

Mughniyeh was a leader of the military wing of Hezbollah, which has fought Israel’s occupation of Lebanon since 1982. Israel’s secret police, the Mossad, and the U.S. CIA had been hunting him since 1983, when he allegedly planned truck-bomb attacks on barracks housing U.S. Marines and French troops occupying Lebanon. The U.S. had reportedly put a price of from \$5 million to \$25 million on Mughniyeh’s head.

According to Hezbollah and other anti-imperialist organizations in the region, it was Mossad that carried out the assassination.

Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, general secretary of Hezbollah, eulogized Mughniyeh and praised his role in fighting for liberation, saying that tens of thousands would rise up to replace the martyr. He called the killing of Mughniyeh “a big mistake” that would be avenged and said the struggle may be extended beyond Israel-occupied territory and Lebanon.

Nasrallah said that in the war of 2006, Hezbollah exposed the weaknesses of the Israelis. At that time, the Lebanese resistance—a coalition that included other groups, like the Lebanese Communist Party, but with Hezbollah as the leading force—successfully defended Lebanon from an Israeli invasion.

Nasrallah pointed out in his funeral



PHOTOS: AL MANAR
Millions in the Muslim and Arab world see Israel as behind the assassination of Imad Mughniyeh. Here, an outpouring in Beirut to mourn him.

speech that the Zionist leader David Ben-Gurion, a founder of the state of Israel, had written that Israel would fall after its first defeat in a war. He added that the recently released Winograd report—about an inquiry by Israel into the 2006 war—admitted that this war was Israel’s first real defeat. These facts were the basis for Nasrallah’s statement that “The blood of Imad Mughniyeh will eliminate [Israel].”

Reactions from diverse groups condemn Israel, U.S.

In the Syrian capital, the leftist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine blamed the Israelis for the killing, which they vowed to avenge.

Al-Manar, Hezbollah’s television channel, said that Mughniyeh exhausted Israel for a quarter of a century and called his death a loss to Lebanon and Palestine.

Usamah Hamdan, representative of the Hamas movement in Lebanon, said, “The crime is a direct offshoot of the campaign being launched by the U.S. administration against the resistance forces in the region.”

Abu-Imad al-Rifa’i, representative of the Islamic Jihad Movement in Lebanon, said that “The blood of martyr Imad will breathe new life in, and unleash, the jihad and struggle of our people in Palestine.” He added that “The blood of the martyrs in the Islamic resistance in Lebanon flows together with the blood

that is being spilled in Palestine.”

Dr. Hazim Abu-Shanab, a Fatah movement leader in Gaza, said: “All the assassinations committed by the Israeli occupation state against the Palestinians, Lebanese and all others are criminal acts that violate international law and can never be tolerated. All the resistance factions should aid one another.”

“The stamp of the criminal [Israeli Defense Minister Ehud] Barak is on this cowardly operation, for which, God willing, he will personally pay a heavy price,” said the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, the armed wing of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas’s Fatah movement.

Other media reported that Lebanese Christian opposition leader Michel Aoun, who has been allied with Hezbollah, said, “The assassination of Mughniyeh is a clear aggression on Lebanon and Syria.”

Former Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani condemned the U.S. and Israel for welcoming Mughniyeh’s assassination, saying the car bomb that killed him was an act of terrorism.

U.S., Israeli role

The Israeli state has assassinated many Palestinian and other Arab liberation leaders over the decades, sometimes openly taking credit for these terrorist acts. While this time the Israeli government denied it had killed the historic Hezbollah leader, both members of the

Knesset (Parliament) and the Israeli media celebrated Mughniyeh’s death as a victory for the Israeli state. White House statements also celebrated the military leader’s death.

Veteran Israeli peace activist Uri Avnery wrote on Feb. 16 of the orgy of self-congratulation in the Israeli media over Mughniyeh’s killing, despite the Israeli government’s official denial. He described Israel as being expert in high technology but even more expert in “liquidations.” He pointed out how earlier liquidations—such as that of Hezbollah General Secretary Abbas Mussawi in 1992 by U.S.-built helicopter gunships—roused the same orgy of self-satisfaction in Israel, but had only led to an increase of strength for Hezbollah.

White House spokesperson Gordon Johndroe would say only that he was “not familiar with the circumstances of the death,” when asked if the U.S. had played any role in the assassination. (New York Times, Feb. 14) Al-Jazeera television said the U.S. had mounted several secret operations in recent years that had repeatedly tried to capture or kill Mughniyeh, but without success.

Mughniyeh was on the FBI’s list of “most wanted terrorists” and had been indicted in the U.S. for his alleged role in planning the 1985 hijacking of a TWA airliner. He was accused of an unbelievably large number of military actions, the most dramatic being the bombings of barracks of foreign troops occupying Lebanon in October 1983 that killed 241 U.S. Marines and 58 French paratroopers.

At that time, the Reagan administration and the Mitterrand government in France had sent the youth of their countries to be cannon fodder in an imperialist occupation of Lebanon. The explosions at the barracks drove them out. It should be no surprise then, that Mughniyeh, assuming he was responsible, became a hero and martyr for the Lebanese while being called a “terrorist” by the imperialist oppressors.

E-mail: jcat@workers.org

What about reparations?

New Australian prime minister says ‘Sorry’

By G. Dunkel

The apology of Australia’s Prime Minister Kevin Rudd on Feb. 13 for the racist treatment inflicted on the country’s Aboriginal people was long overdue. For the first time, a prime minister used the word “sorry,” even though Sorry Day has been a national event since May 26, 1998.

However, for all of Rudd’s repeated “sorries,” the government is still refusing to pay compensation to people who lost their families, their languages and their way of life.

Rudd’s speech, which was the first order of parliamentary business for his new Labor government, drew over 1 million Australians to stop work, stop classes and gather around large-screen televisions. A major poll released Feb. 18, after much intense discussion had taken place, reported that over two-thirds of all Australians supported Rudd’s apology.

The response of opposition spokesperson Brendan Nelson to Rudd’s apology was so shockingly racist and filled with lies that in many places people shouted him down with raised fists, turned their backs, or pulled the plugs on their televisions. The Sydney Sun-Herald, a major newspaper in Australia’s largest city,

said that one opposition spokesperson’s comment “was plainly ridiculous.” The spokesperson had said that the previous prime minister, John Howard, had done more for Aboriginal people than any other Australian prime minister.

Rudd’s apology (www.pm.gov.au) singled out Aboriginal children taken from their families, known as the “stolen generation.”

The 2002 film “Rabbit-Proof Fence,” which follows three Aboriginal girls on a 1,300-mile trek through the Australian outback as they try to return home after being seized by government officials and taken away from their mothers, played a major role in building support for the “stolen generation.” The film was a dramatization of real-life people and events.

A government report issued in 1997 revealed that, between 1885 and 1967, 30 percent to 50 percent of all Aboriginal children had been taken from their families by government agents. The numbers reported range from 70,000 to 100,000.

Australia stated its position clearly at a Commonwealth conference in 1937, “The destiny of the natives of Aboriginal origin, but not of the full blood, lies in their ultimate absorption.” It restated its views in 1951, “The aim is assimilation ... until the

Aborigines live like any white Australian.”

Most of the children had white fathers and Aboriginal mothers. “Chief Protectors” were appointed by each of Australia’s six states to become the legal guardians of these children. The openly racist content of their reports clearly indicates the genocidal intent of Australia’s legal system. Said Inspector James Idell in 1905: “I would not hesitate for one moment to separate any half-caste from its Aboriginal mother, no matter how frantic her momentary grief might be at the time. They soon forget their offspring.” And Chief Protector Cook, 1911, “Children are removed from the evil influence of the Aboriginal camp, with its lack of moral training and its risk of serious organic infectious disease.” [Le Monde Diplomatique (Eng.), Oct. 2000]

The children were supposed to be put in “charitable” institutions. Faye Lynam, an Aboriginal from Shepparton in northern Victoria, who was mentioned by name in Nelson’s speech—which she called “toxic”—told the Sydney Morning Herald: “My dad was not happy that I was taken. They cheated us, they cheated me of my life with him and now I feel like I’m stolen all over again. I am ashamed that he [Nelson] has done this to me, I’m so ashamed.”

She went on, “When I went for a so-called better life, I was sexually assaulted, used as a little slave.” She managed to return to her father at age 16, after living in several foster homes.

Not just stolen, oppressed in many ways

Statistics make it clear how tough life is for Aboriginals compared to white Australians. Their life expectancy is 17 years less, infant mortality is four times higher, unemployment three times higher, average income less than a half, imprisonment and suicide rates five times higher. Alcoholism and gas sniffing are rampant, so common that they constitute a slow suicide for whole communities.

Just after his speech, Rudd’s Labor Party announced a four-year, \$58-million plan to hire 200 teachers for isolated Northern outback communities, where many people speak their own languages rather than English, illiteracy is high and many schools are without teachers.

Under a 1992 High Court ruling, enshrining the Mabo Act, these Northern communities have title to a large swath of land that is possibly rich in minerals. The Mabo case was the first recognition

Continued on page 10

EL PRESUPUESTO DE BUSH

Banquete para el ejército, hambre para el pueblo

¿Permitirán los Demócratas que se salga con la suya?

Por LeiLani Dowell

Hasta los noticieros capitalistas dicen que es algo increíble. Pero sólo es así por su descaro.

En su último presupuesto antes de retirarse de su muy odiada presidencia—en un tiempo de crisis económica que afecta mayormente a l@s trabajador@s—el Presidente George W. Bush ha propuesto aumentar el presupuesto del ejército a niveles sin precedente, mientras recorta a su vez programas domésticos y hace de los recortes en los impuestos para los ricos algo permanente.

La cifra de \$515.4 mil millones propuesta por Bush para gastos militares es aproximadamente el total de todos los presupuestos militares del resto del mundo. El diario The Washington Post, reporta que esta cifra “es 7.5% mayor que la del año actual y promete financiar algunos de los programas de armamentos más grandes y costosos de las fuerzas armadas.” (11 de feb.)

Sin embargo, esta cifra ni siquiera incluye las guerras en Irak y Afganistán, que serían \$70 mil millones más, y eso sólo hasta el fin de la presidencia de Bush, cuando los oficiales del Pentágono esperan que la nueva presidencia financie las guerras con miles de millones más.

(Washington Post, 5 de feb.)

Agréguese a esa cantidad otros puntos no mencionados en el presupuesto, como los miles de millones de dólares para cabezas nucleares y para otras agencias como el FBI. El escritor de la columna titulada “War Stories” del noticiero electrónico Slate.com, Fred Kaplan, dice que el presupuesto subiría a \$713 mil millones (Slate.com, 4 de feb.)

El Washington Post reporta que para acomodar este aumento en gasto militar, el plan de Bush intentaría “recortar \$14.2 mil millones de los programas federales de salud en el año 2009, eliminaría veintenas de programas y virtualmente congelaría los programas domésticos. (5 de feb.)

¿Se acuerda de la crisis continua de SIDA, particularmente en las comunidades de color? ¿Se acuerda del decadente sistema de educación, gracias en parte al programa de Bush, “Ningún niño dejado atrás”? ¿Se acuerda de la crisis de viviendas que continúa dejando a la gente en la calle por todo el país? ¿Se acuerda de l@s sobrevivientes de los huracanes Katrina y Rita?

El Washington Post agrega, “El plan... extendería los programas de enseñanza de abstinencia [y] crearía cupones de vales para escuelas elementales y secundarias. ...Entre los programas que Bush

eliminaría están los programas de alimentación para niñ@s pobres.... la asistencia para resguardar las viviendas contra las condiciones de tiempo adversas, las subvenciones para el desarrollo de las comunidades... y los programas de revitalización de viviendas que la Cámara de Representantes acaba de aprobar abrumadoramente.”

El Centro de Prioridades relativo al Presupuesto y las Políticas, reporta que “casi todas las áreas del presupuesto doméstico” quedarían afectadas, resultando en que 200.000 mil niñ@s dejarían de recibir asistencia para su cuidado; 100,000 hogares dejarían de recibir asistencia para la vivienda; \$433 millones menos para el Centro para el Control y Prevención de Enfermedades; \$330 millones menos para la Agencia para la Protección del Medio Ambiente; recortes de \$18.2 mil millones en el programa de Medicaid en un lapso de 5 años y de \$556 miles de millones en el programa de Medicare en 10 años; y una reducción en el Programa de Asistencia de Energía para los Hogares de Bajo Ingreso, el cual tendría que remover a más de un millón de familias y ancian@s del programa, reducir la cantidad de asistencia provista en un 22%, o una combinación de ambas. (www.CBPP.ORG, 7 de feb.)

Sin embargo, Bush no va a dejar que los

ricos sufran por causa de su inflado presupuesto militar. El mismo reporte dice que los recortes de impuestos de Bush costarán \$2,4 mil billones durante los próximos 10 años. El Centro dice que los recortes de impuestos combinados a hogares con ingresos de más de \$1 millón anuales—sólo un 0.3 por ciento de los hogares del país— “excedería la cantidad total que el gobierno federal gasta en educación primaria y secundaria, así como la cantidad total que dedica al cuidado médico para los veteranos del ejército de la nación”.

Bush ha proyectado un déficit de más de \$400 mil millones como resultado de este presupuesto, asumiendo que la economía de este país se expanda en un 2,7 por ciento, cifra que parece improbable en un período cuando la economía se inclina hacia una recesión.

Analistas y fuentes de noticias están diciendo que esto es un lío que Bush va a dejarle para que arregle a la próxima presidencia. Pero, como siempre, la carga no la van a sentir l@s políticos, sino l@s trabajador@s, quienes van a sufrir innecesariamente mientras el gobierno alimenta a los contratistas de la industria de “defensa” y el impulso para más guerra. Y como siempre, serán sólo las luchas de l@s trabajador@s lo que tiene la posibilidad de poner un alto a estos ataques. □

Venezuela lucha contra los criminales corporativos de Exxon

Por Jaimeson Champion

El gobierno venezolano ha prometido que los recientes intentos por parte de la compañía petrolera más grande del mundo, ExxonMobil, de robar los bienes que pertenecen al pueblo venezolano, van a encontrarse con una dura resistencia.

ExxonMobil ha estado cabildeando en las cortes imperialistas de los EEUU y Europa para congelar los bienes en el exterior de la compañía estatal de petróleo de Venezuela, PDVSA. El 8 de febrero, cortes en el Reino Unido y en los Países Bajos emitieron medidas provisionales judiciales que, en espera de apelaciones, congelarían aproximadamente \$12 mil millones en bienes de la PDVSA en Europa. Una decisión judicial en los EEUU será vista por una corte federal en Manhattan el 13 de febrero.

Las decisiones de las cortes son un robo con sello legal. Las cortes que emitieron estas decisiones son parte del Centro Internacional para el Arreglo de Disputas sobre Inversiones (ICSID por las siglas en inglés). El ICSID está controlado por el Banco Mundial. Opera como un grupo de tribunales ilegales, establecidos para emitir decretos que favorecen a las corpo-

raciones e instituciones bancarias trasnacionales. El Banco Mundial está ayudando a ExxonMobil en el intento de robar bienes con un valor de miles de millones de dólares al pueblo venezolano.

En una declaración radial el 10 de febrero, el presidente de Venezuela, Hugo Chávez respondió a los recientes fallos de la corte diciendo: “Me dirijo al imperio estadounidense, porque es él quien manda: siga así y verá que no enviamos ni una sola gota de petróleo al imperio de los EEUU”.

El contraste entre ExxonMobil y PDVSA no podía ser más marcado. ExxonMobil es una corporación sanguinaria que ha dejado muerte y destrucción del medio ambiente desde Irak hasta Nigeria, pasando por Indonesia y Valdez, en Alaska. Desde derramamientos masivos de petróleo que han destruido ecosistemas enteros, hasta guerras criminales por petróleo que han destruido países enteros, la ExxonMobil ha ganado fama como el epitome de malversación corporativa y por su brutalidad. Muchos de los miles y miles de millones de dólares en ganancias anuales de Exxon son utilizados para enriquecer aún más a los ejecutivos corporativos y a sus accionistas ric@s.

Contrariamente, PDVSA es propiedad del pueblo venezolano quien la maneja para el beneficio del pueblo venezolano. En 2007, más de \$13.3 miles de millones de dólares en ingresos de PDVSA fueron encaminados hacia gastos sociales en Venezuela.

El dinero creado por PDVSA es utilizado para pagar doctor@s y servicios de cuidado de salud, programas de alimentos y nutrición, escuelas y maestr@s, y muchos otros programas sociales en Venezuela. Una de las contribuciones más grandes de PDVSA a la sociedad venezolana ha sido su trabajo en el desarrollo de sistemas de agua potable por todo el país, que ahora traen agua a casas que anteriormente no tenían acceso.

L@s trabajador@s de PDVSA desempeñan un papel activo en organizar los proyectos sociales de PDVSA. A través de su participación en lo que se conoce como los consejos de trabajador@s, los trabajador@s de PDVSA deciden cuál es la mejor manera de asignar los ingresos de PDVSA para satisfacer las necesidades de sus propias comunidades.

El intento de ExxonMobil de robar los bienes de PDVSA es sólo la acción criminal más reciente en una larga serie

de ataques llevados a cabo por las fuerzas del imperialismo contra el pueblo de Venezuela. Encabezado por los Estados Unidos los poderes imperialistas han tratado cada táctica posible para intentar desestabilizar la Revolución Bolivariana. Desde el sabotaje económico hasta la organización de protestas estudiantiles lideradas por l@s hij@s de la vieja oligarquía, y hasta el robo directo de recursos, los poderes imperialistas han utilizado todos los instrumentos disponibles.

Pero hasta ahora los esfuerzos de los imperialistas por descarrilar el “proceso” que así llaman l@s venezolan@s la transformación revolucionaria de la sociedad venezolana de capitalismo a socialismo—no han sido exitosos. El proceso sigue desarrollándose mientras el pueblo venezolano valientemente se enfrenta a los ataques criminales perpetrados contra él.

A medida que el pueblo venezolano continúa la lucha contra el imperio estadounidense, es imperativo que l@s trabajador@s aquí en los Estados Unidos, y por todo el mundo, se unan en solidaridad con sus hermanas y hermanos venzolan@s, y a su valiente lucha contra el imperialismo. □